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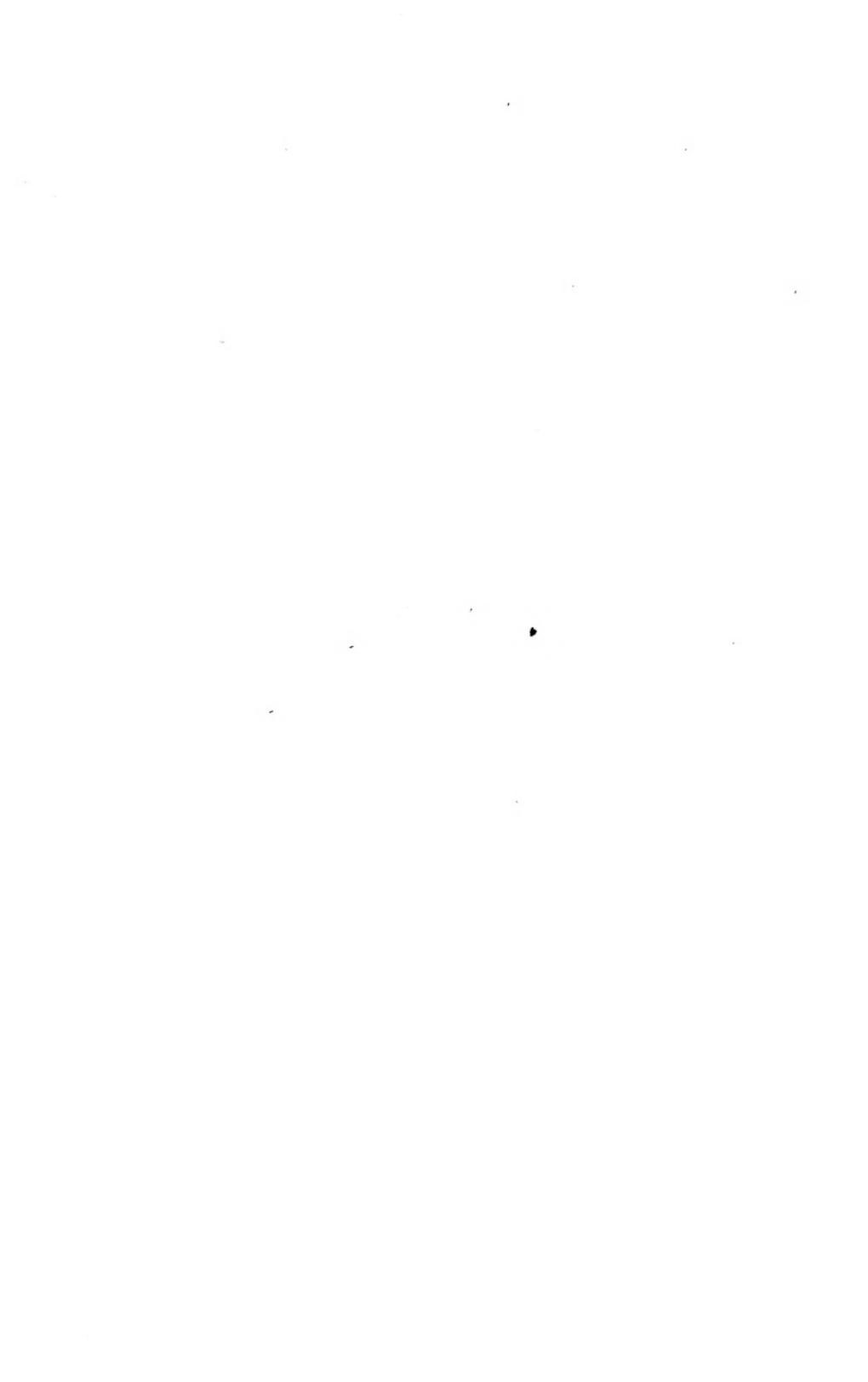
POEMS of
Two WORLDS

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



POEMS OF TWO WORLDS.

BY

REV. T. HEMPSTEAD.



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TO

My Faithful Daughter

JULIA,

WHO HAS TENDED ME THROUGH MY LONG
AND PAINFUL DECLINE,

These Poems are Affectionately Dedicated,

BY HER FATHER.

FAIRBURY, ILL., June, 1886.

P R E F A C E.

MANY of these poems were published in religious newspapers while their author was still living; others are now printed for the first time. They reveal a deeply poetic spirit, in closest touch with Nature, and finding in her a refuge from the importunity of the deepest problems with which the soul of man has to do. It cannot be said that these poems are the utterances of the modern spirit; in form they belong to a past generation, but the thought and the feeling which animate them will never be out of date.

L. S. H.

NEW YORK,
Nov. 22, 1889.

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P O E M S.

THROUGH THE SWAMP.

No path is here, but I will struggle on,
For I must dip beneath these sylvan glooms,
And ere the sun, descending, fires the fringe
Of hairy pines that blacken yonder ridge,
Pick my rude, winding, solitary way
Through stony dells and wilds whose every foot
Is sharp with tangled lycopodium stems,
Sweet with the breath of birch and wintergreen,
And wrapped in shadows falling broad and cool
From canopies of tall Canadian fir.

Still, sombre, sunk between three savage hills
Whose sides are rough with rocks and blasted pines,
And thick with mouldering stumps and bramble rows,
It lies, in solitude and verdure drowned.
Now I essay the wild descent. Behold
The spot I sought, — the silent, flowery swamp !

Huge trunks, extended on the surface, rot
Where'er I turn, each in its quaking bed
Of sodden ferns, decaying leaves, and moss.
Fantastically round me near and far
The prostrate giants lie ; some by the root
Upturned, some at the base snapped short, and some
As if by careful hands laid side by side ;
Some crosswise and in strange confusion hurled,
Split, twisted, tilted, half in air and half
In mire, as if in years long dead the storm,
Passing, in sport had seized them by the tops
And whirled them headlong through the troubled
air,
Then dropped on this green, lone morass,— their grave.
Here they have lain so long, the slow-paced years
That on their frames have sifted the white snows,
Showered the sweet rains and shed the early dews,
Are scarcely equalled by the leaves they wore.
Great names have risen and blazed across the heavens
And dropped like dying stars behind the hills ;
Proud cities, street by street, and league by league
Of temple, park, dome, spire, and wharf and bale,
Up from the marsh and wilderness have sprung ;
Great armies have stood face to face, and dashed
The hills with blood, and rent the air with moans
And cries, and drowned the heavens in cannon-smoke,
Since these dead giants with a mighty groan,
A hollow, vast, foreboding wail, unheard

Save by the listening deer and hungry wolf,
Sank to their graves amid these leafy wilds.

What wonders of the holy threefold realm
Of Nature meet my gaze at every turn !
Far o'er the level stretch of ooze, thick-ridged
With boles of Titan hemlock overthrown,
That in the winds and rains dissolving, sink
Lower, lower into their black and weltering graves,
Glistens the plumy mantle of the moss.

Knee-deep among its luminous silken folds
Dropping, I feel as one who walks the air ;
Under my sinking feet the dense, gold-green,
Long, labyrinthine tangles give no sound ;
So tended, clothed, so steeped in glorious life,
Clinging, ascending, falling with its sheer
Splendor of growth and verdure, divine moss !
What monarch ever folded empty hands
Across his breast for that last awful sleep
In richer pomp, or wrapped in fairer shroud
Than that which folds these fallen forest kings ?

Onward beneath the interlocking boughs,
Climbing with steep, slow steps o'er mouldering trees,
Here stretched while generations of my race
From dust have sprung and fallen back to dust,
Or making their green, giant length a bridge

To bear me safe o'er depths of quaking mire
Into the twilight of the hoary woods,
The marvellous life and mystery I press.
Why this new fire in every vein, this swift,
Strange quickening of the pulses of my heart ?
No danger threatens here, no tempest lowers,
No wild beast crouches, and no serpent coils ;
Not this it is, nor that my eye is drawn
By some bewildering floral miracle
Fairer than all that I have seen or dreamed, —
Not this the spur that pricks my languid blood
To such a happy tumult through my veins,
But the mysterious spell that Nature lays
On him who treads her sacred courts aright,
And hears her solemn voice in reverence.

Yet here with coarser plants and common blooms
God, in the impartial riches of his love,
Has sown the wilds. By every glassy pool,
And every sliding current's crystal brim,
The pinxter-flower and water-avens watch,
Through the green length of May's delicious reign,
Their faces in the watery mirror glow ;
And that rank weed, the rough swamp saxifrage,
Makes all the circuit bristle with its wands
Of dull-green flowers. The spicy wintergreen,
Unsought of children, glistens here, and hangs
Its scarlet fruit just o'er the water's edge ;

While all around, farther than eye can range,
Along the noonday twilight's level dusk
The tall wood-violet's million purple eyes
Kindle the shadows with their human smile.

But other plants have lured my feet to rove
This still, sequestered scene, my eye to search
With more than lover's eagerness the sweet,
Deep secret of these cool, enchanted shades ;
For one whose faded cheek can wear no more
The rose that blossomed there in other days
Tells me that sixty long, sad years ago
She in her dreaming girlhood passed this way
At noon or morn, or when the summer woods
Stood up to take the sun's expiring beam,
And saw that weird, inflated forest flower,
The yellow lady's-slipper, shining here.
I turn, and lo ! two lady's-slippers fair, —
Two dainty orchis-blossoms clad in gold,
Together set so near that their smooth leaves
Have touched and interlocked like two white arms
Of two fair girls each round the waist of each.
Oh, it is worth a weary walk o'er steep
And barren hills, scorched by a summer's sun,
To live an hour beneath these flickering glooms
And look upon so sweet and fresh a sight !

But Nature in her lone recesses rears
Another wilding, fair and strangely formed,

That I would gladly see, but find it not.
Deep-purple is the flower, and one curved edge
Of the long leaf is folded round to join
The other, making a large hollow where
The rains that from the dun, cool clouds descend
Drop after drop are hoarded up and lie
Shut in an urn greener than emerald.
So those who tracked the deer and roved the woods
For simples, when they saw this curious plant
Lifting its hooded cup above the bog,
Gave it the homely name of pitcher-plant.

Onward beneath the interlacing boughs,
Into the noonday dusk, the mystery,
The musky shades, I press. At every step
The stillness deepens round me more and more ;
For, save the muffled beating of my heart,
Or lone infrequent call of some strange bird
High perched amid the dark of many leaves,
No whisper mars the silence of the place.

Thickly as maize-hills in the furrowed field,
Before, around me, little islands rise,
Of woven roots and mouldered leaves and stems
That rest or float upon the shuddering ooze ;
Daintily, dewily from each sheeny tuft
Gushes a pale blue fire of violets,
With plume and breath of fern and trail of vine ;

I pass from crest to crest ; sometimes a leap
Must bear me clear o'er intervening mire
To firmer soil. Oh, as my feet descend
Upon the nearest tuft, a whole bright world
Of beauty is extinguished at a breath !
A little universe of symmetry,
Power, mystery, and divinest handiwork,
Cells, walls, tubes, pores, and hair-like, wandering veins
Crossing, recrossing, palmate, penniform,
Wonderful ; streams, pools, and whirling vortices
Of limpid, silent-flowing emerald,
Clear-running pearl and liquid chrysolite,
Where Nature, patient, tender, wise, withdrawn,
Distils her subtle balms and living hues, —
All at my feet a formless ruin lie.

O rapture of the dim and solemn woods !
O calms that fold all seen and outward things, —
Leaves, waters, air ! O sweeter inward calms,
That to my being's inmost part go down
Until I seem to walk the deathless groves,
And hear the murmur of the immortal streams,
And all the happy laughter of a world
That never heard a groan or held a grave ! —
Was that the sudden gleam and float of robes
Of Dryads, Hamadryads, flitting past ?
Or that the flow of Pan's gray, hircine beard
Flung out a moment on the dusky air,

While he in haste slid like a pallid star
Behind the covert of that mossy pine ?

As I beneath this broad cathedral stand,
With these sweet, innocent children of the shades,
Wild-flowers, new leaves, and finely fronded ferns,
And one pervading, mystic, endless hymn
(Unwritten, and by outward ear unheard)
Sent up from every leaf and thread of moss,
The thoughts that in me rise are strange and sad.
I feel as if a solemn, sighing wind
Ran, and a thousand years had run and sighed,
Across a hollow land where no man goes,
And nothing lives save roses red and white,
And sweet and beautiful as dews e'er fed,
Or winds of summer plundered as they passed,—
All sending down rank roots into a grave,
And kindling with their smile a land of graves.

The wing'd years from man have taken much,
The wing'd years perhaps have given more,
Since that far age when men in groves and streams,
And waves that broke along the lonely shore,
Saw more than the inert, familiar forms
Of Nature,— shadows, rocks, trees, hills, and flowers.
Shapes to be feared, appeased, bright, deathless, swift
And strong, of finer essence, nobler mould,
Glanced through the quivering shadows of the wood,

Peopled the caves and hollows of the hills,
And windy spaces of the sea and air, —
Nymphs of the oak, the grotto, and the fount,
Whose locks and limbs, bathed in a rosy light,
Rivalled the fairest forms of earth, and vied
With her who in her glorious beauty sprang
Perfect from out the green sea's blowing foam.
Then oft at morn or dead of night, or when
The sun, descending, bathed in flowing gold
The mountain ridges, clouds, and leaping waves,
From wooded hills and solitary shores
Floated melodious voices, harpings wild
And strangely sweet, such as no earthly harp
Hath flung to any breeze, or earthly flute
Hid in the secret of its golden cells.

With bloody brow, and wounds in foot, in hand
And side, such as no mortal flesh had borne,
And a strange light kindling his placid eye,
Which seemed to say, “ Though none have been so poor,
So lonely and rejected, scorned and bruised,
Yet, yet the lands and all the sea are mine,”
The Nazarene came by and passed from sight.
No more the vales, the streams, the lapping waves,
Mountains and waving groves and caverns dim
Glanced with the feet and echoed with the songs
Of forms surpassing human. Prayer went up,
And temples rose to him in all the land;

In all the land the temples of the gods
Grew silent and were not. The serpent crawled
Along the marble floors, and loathsome bats
Hung their huge clusters from the rotting domes.
Luther, Columbus, and Copernicus
Came ; came the compass, cannon, printing-press ;
Men saw in stately woods and whispering groves
No more a scene thronged by ethereal shapes,
Dian, or Pan, or Dryad of the oak,
But trees, trees only, waiting for the saw
Whose flying teeth should change their lordly trunks
To merchantable stuff, beam, plank, and lath,—
The only wise and noble use of trees.

The flashing mill-wheel scared the water-nymph
From the clear pools of her beloved stream ;
Huge banks of sawdust choked its crystal course ;
The stately pines, that saw its sources leap
Clear from the snowy mountain's cloven walls,
Were cut away. The silver-sided trout,
That through the dimpling eddies slipped, or lurked
Beneath the twisted roots of willow, larch,
Alder, or leaning fir, or spreading beech,
Died in its place, or, driven to other haunts,
Held a brief, trembling term, and was extinct.
So passed the beauteous dwellers of the stream,
So went the mystic haunters of the wood,
Meadow and mountain, wave and grotto dim ;

Dryad and oread, satyr, sylph, and faun
Passed into silence as a dream, a sound,
But lust and greed and war and doubt remained.
Dead was the mighty Pan ; the Nazarene,
With Mammon his arch-enemy, survived.
Naiad and fairy, troll and ghost and ghoul
Have perished. The Philistine lives to blab,
Lie, pilfer, hoard, and laugh at hell and heaven.

Deeper into the folding shades ; and lo !
A thing of more than earthly loveliness ;
A glory lighting up the verdant gloom ;
An object too divinely beautiful
Ever to perish out of memory
Through endless trains of years, whether in this
Or some more fair and ample world that floats
In God's remotest brotherhood of stars ;
To haunt me, to waylay, become a part
Of all that I must suffer, be, and feel ;
A never silent music in my soul ;
A rose that will not perish from the land.
A little stream flows on without a sound
Or ripple, save where darts the golden trout
On the incautious prey, crossed here and there
By lengths of greenest moss upborne on roots
Of alder, hemlock, fern, and murmurous pine, —
Bridges of braided chrysoprase that stretch
From brink to fringy brink, unbroken, soft,

As down from breast of any bird God made
To cleave the Tropic or the Arctic wave.
And underneath, the clear, cool water slides,
With little calms, dissolving whirls and glows,
Pellucid, restful, lustrous, dark, and still,
As the unwrinkled ocean of the night,
When half her silver galleons float out
To glitter, moored upon that windless sea.

O kingly columns ! Arches broad and vast !
Transparent leaves through which the sunshine throbs !
O velvet floor inlaid with blue and gold !
Borne on the smooth, still pulses of the air,
Your verdure slides into my blood and brain,
Till I forget the blustering, bartering world
That just beyond these limits calls and raves.
To walk these purple aisles not made with hands ;
To tread this carpet, fragrant, soft as wool,
With heavy heart that seeks a little rest,
And lift my eyes to where these meeting boughs
Build their cool Paradise of shade and bloom ;
To part, with pollen-sprinkled feet, these knots
Of trilliums whose falling, lurid eyes
Give me glad welcome to their dusky haunts ;
To see how thoughtful, fresh, and happy seem
The huddled ferns that fringe these little knolls
And islets green afloat on the morass ;
To watch these large, dull-purple avens-blooms

Watching their faces in the water's face,
To me is deeper joy and ampler life
Than power, success, the city's noise and glare,
And all that riches, fame, and traffic give.
Not that earth's sensuous, ever-fading forms,
Woods, waters, shadows, hues, alone can please ;
But these have power to call around me forms
Unseen, — hues, hills, groves, splendors, powers, a world
To which the world I walk is but a veil,
A broken image, a reflection dim.

And now, to woods, shades, verdure, dreams, farewell !
I have not seen the miracle I would,
But I have heard the beating of my heart
Amid the stillness of the mingling boughs.
I little hope that I shall live or think, —
That any woman, man, or gentle child
Will live or think again when death has spread
His ice-cold hand upon the eye, and closed
The lids, and stilled the beating of the heart ;
But I all day, along these silent shades,
Have heard sweet voices calling, calling me,
And felt invisible footsteps following me,
Too light to bend the slenderest spire of moss.
My lost, sad childhood I have lived again,
Clasped hands that in the flesh we clasp no more,
Looked in some lovely faces, some dear eyes,

That now are dust beneath a mound of dust ;
And o'er this mossy carpet, golden-green,
Betwixt the upper green and lower gold,
And flower and fern-plume bending, I have heard
The feet of God move down these solemn shades.

THE SOUTH WIND.

A LITTLE while, and here,
Where I, crowned with a deathless sorrow, stand,
Facing the cold, dun clouds and naked land,
 The gray puccoon will rear
 Its head of burnished gold ;
Spring all its splendid miracle renew,
And quickened blades upward in silence through
 Brown leaves and loosened mould
 Push to the light. Here God
Will prove his sleepless care and wondrous power
In warming death to life, and moulding flower
 From lifeless dust and clod.

Among these wakening boughs
The glad South Wind will run with sound of palms,
Murmur of woods that drink the golden calms
 Of the deep Cuban hills,
 Or dash of Orizaba's snow-cold rills.
Oh, that light spirit of the air will bring
In his gay train each happy, smiling thing, —
 Star-flowers whose timid beauty fills
 The cool wood-alleys dim ;
 Anemones that from the brim

Of prattling brooks lean pensively,
Their faces in the quiet pool to see ;
Wood-violets that swim
And tremble in the light
And shadow of their maiden loveliness ;
Grass for the field, songs for the wilderness, —
All life's delicious fire and might
Clothed in sweet waters, million-colored hues,
Quick-glancing wings, young leaves, and trembling dews.

Breath of the lavish Spring,
Come, bring its full-blown glory to the tree ;
Joy, motion, splendor of grass and hum of bee, —
One face thou canst not bring !
In the last year that died
(He saw her die), in years that are no more,
In long bright summers that are bright no more,
That face smiled at my side.
It looked on these wide plains
In joy supreme. The endless reach of green,
The warmth, the breadth and glory of the scene,
The great wind of the prairie solemnly
Blowing, the rest and rapture of the sky
Were heaven begun in all her glowing veins.

To that clear, quiet eye
This was a lovely world. These mournful pines,
And branching orchard rows, and trailing vines,

Were more than trees and vines ;
Voices, beckoning gleams
Were they, from that Green Land, fore-reaching dreams
Too fair in death, lost, unredeemed to lie.
The gentle birds that sung
The apple-boughs among,
And loved the vines that crept above the door,
Than happy birds were more,—
Vistas through which she saw
The breadth and length of Love's eternal law.

The still September days
Streamed out along the world ; she turned away.
Through what wild night up to what tranquil day
The road she travelled lay,
I could not tell. See how these maples blaze !
With cheerful words and radiant face among
Their shades she moved ; their rustle and their bloom.
Does she remember, know how deep a gloom
Her dying round us flung ?
Is that strange world which she
Has reached, so beautiful, so rich in bliss,
So bright beyond the brightest hues of this,
So sweet to hear and see,
That like a ripened leaf
Earth with its flowers of joy and fires of grief
Drops out of memory,
And she no more, no more

Heeds or remembers all the season brings,—
Song, fragrance, blossom, flash and flight of wings, —
Walking that mystic shore ?
Or will she say to those
Who round her smile, *On my forsaken home*
Now breaks the tender grass, now pansies bloom,
And now the rose ?

Will no one tell me clear
Above all guesses, dreams, where walk our dead,
Who left the world so bare when forth they sped ?
God, and thou meek, much-suffering Christ, I fear,
Tremble and fear,
Lest when with fluttering breath
Man drops into the hollow gulf of death.
He will not feel or weep,
Remember, wince with pain,
Dream, love, or hate again,
But with sealed eyelids fall upon a sleep
As hell's foundations deep.

Justice is good, and good it is to hold
The truth, and walk in charity with all ;
But when at last the long, dark night shall fall,
And at the door winds puff the sable pall,
And a sullen bell is tolled,
And the white roses on the coffin glowing
Fresh as if still upon the trellis blowing,

Diffuse a smell of mould,
Then help us, God, and thou
That dost his Word expound !
Where in those frozen wastes profound,
 On what lone world
In yonder blue, through frost and silence whirled,
 Lieth the spirit's goal ?
What clime *is* there to hold the absent soul,
 Thought, feeling, memory, now
That ice is on the heart and dust is on the brow ?

We know in part ; still for the truth we grope ;
 Fool me with no fond hope
Born of the wish that when I close my eyes
On earth I quit a dungeon for the skies ;
No vision of a sensuous, golden heaven,
To John amid those seven thunders given,
With endless waving of the victor palm,
 And sound of endless psalm,
From Doubt's fierce bitterness can free,
 Or lay the torturing fear.
Our ears, though dull, can hear,
Too near, too near, as noise of battle clear,
 The warning of the sea,
The wail and ceaseless moaning of the sea,
That chafes and gnaws the small, volcanic isle
 Whereon we sweat and toil,
Trying between the snow and rain to smile;

Sowing in tears the grain
We reap in infinite pain,
Till the cold sea creeps up, and we go down,
In the black waves to drown.

But thou, Wind of the South,
Lead on thy birds and bloom,— oh happy train !
Clear over icy hill and desert plain
Blow, blow with odorous mouth.
Hushed lips, dust-covered eyes
Are not for thee. Sing, strew the world with flowers,
And with thy odorous breath
Breathe not one hint of death.
From Southern seas and sunny lands
Come with full-lilied hands
And lean above these graves. Bring violets, showers
Of silver fall, till these dead clods arise
In grassy wilds and groves and forest bowers
Hued like the sun and skies.

CARMEN VERNUM.

A JOY, a silvery trouble in the air,
Songs dizzy with love's swift and potent wine,
Reel from the elm ; I have seen flashing wings
This vernal morning.

The moan you misdeemed thunder was a wail
Of ice, whirled, routed, scattered by the sun
And God's warm wind, chased down from Baffin's Bay ;
Ice on the granite tusks of Labrador
Writhing and yelling.

You think He works no more by miracle, —
Three paces distant gleams that lusty drift,
And here this crocus. Of the time to wake
What lips have told it ?

Who knows ? What can we know save forms and hues ?
Who tells what footsteps round us fall unheard ?
Who guesses to what wondrous lands may stretch
Behind these shadows ?

The air, the groves, the ground, are full of tongues,
A call of breeze to stream, of beam to bud,
Of bird to flashing bird, and bough to bough,
Wake, my beloved !

*Past is the winter, over is the rain,
The rain is past and over ; on the earth
The flowers appear; her robe from hem to hem
With stars is spangled.*

*The fig-tree putteth forth her tender leaves,
The budding vines diffuse a goodly smell.
My fair one, haste away ; come is the time
Of singing birds : through all the land is heard
The voice of turtles !*

So sang the Bard of old ; so sing the birds ;
The crystal blood of every spreading tree
To that delicious music swells and mounts.
The brooks will sing it when our lips are dumb,
The boughs repeat it when we cannot hear ;
The grass will wave, the dandelion blow,
When we are not remembered any more
Than the poor hands that piled the Pyramids.
Shall we awake ? Will the long night roll off,
The clouds blow over ?

A thousand trees on every golden hill,
A thousand buds on every budding tree,

As many human homes as buds of trees,
For number like the army of the leaves.
The years flow on. At any point in all
Two cold feet sliding down. Oh, are you sure
The “ Father ” heedeth ?

Give me earth’s pleasant things until the end, —
Shades, dews and groves, and violets that turn
Sweet human eyes to mine in lonely ways,
With winds in swinging pines. Is this the Night ?
Will it be long, does any know how long
And cold, till morning ?

We all must go to sleep. When we have slept
Long, long, shall we awake ? And when we wake,
With other lilies, mountains, streams, and groves,
Fairer than earthly, oh, but like, so like,
Will He surprise us ?

There stands a hill beyond the river, black
From base to top with tall, majestic firs, —
A maze through which the sun would fail to shoot
His finest arrow.

A temple fairer than the Hebrew Bard
Builded of old the fragrant summit crowns ;
With pale wood-lilies shines the leafy floor,
And orchis wands shot up from two round leaves
Of glistening satin.

Strong, shapely columns prop the whispering roof,
Green, broad, and cool that roof above them spreads ;
Oh the sweet calms, the silence and the dreams,
The wandering odors !

As soon as June comes forth with beams and dews
To feed her happy roses, I shall climb
Into that stately temple ; from its courts
No cares can hold me.

For some sweet friends have I that wait me there, —
Viburnum, kalmia, corydalis,
Uncurling ferns and sanguine trilliums,
With foreheads downcast.

There too will pass the Master Builder great,
Upon his children smiling. Him shall I
Beneath the cool and lofty arches hear
At noonday walking.

THE NORTHERN MARCH.

FORTH from the portals of the ruddy east
Thou comest, wild of eye and strong of limb ;
 Along the frozen hills
 Sharp clangs thy iron mail.

Thou bringest neither leaf nor plumpy fern ;
No young rose nestles in thy streaming hair ;
 Around thy ringing feet
 No tender blossom springs.

Yet beauty walks with thee, bleak, boisterous month ;
Stiff are thy robes with gems, hale are thy cheeks ;
 Down the cold northern blast
 Far streams thy pearly beard.

Thou callest back the bluebird to his cell,
The same from which his last-year's fledglings cried ;
 His silvery note makes glad
 The groves and faded vales.

All day I rove the brown, deserted fields
Still striped with gleaming drifts ; in vain I seek
 By bank or sheltered nook
 A wind-flower's tremulous eye.

I climb the windy hill. High overhead
The hoary hemlocks toss their giant boughs ;
 Down from their rigid arms
 Descends the long, gray moss,

And on thy blast floats like a hermit's beard,
Streams like a pennon down the gusty gloom.
 Myriads of shrivelled cones
 Of fir and spreading burrs

Of beech bestrew the slowly dwindling drifts.
Here runs the rabbit's tangled path, and here
 The sharper, straighter trail
 Of grouse or stealthy fox.

High perched among thy swinging boughs the jay
Screams his harsh battle-challenge far around —
 The gaudy, clang ing jay,
 Whose savage trumpet-call

Pierces the sultry Venezuelan calms
No less than tamarack swamps of Canada.
 See, from a doorway round,
 Set in that blasted pine,

A whiskered face and two large, lustrous eyes,
Where the red squirrel, sprightliest of his kind,
Builds from the wintry blast
A covert safe and warm;

But when the mild and sunny days come round,
He flashes from his comfortable home,
And forth from tree to tree
Shoots like a dusky fire.

Along the waste of lingering, lessening snows,
A wilderness of columns, tall, superb,
The spouted maples rise,
Their veins with honey crammed.

From base to top a slow blue vapor climbs,
Curling about thy stalwart limbs, O March,
From where, in simmering pans,
Bubbles the nectar brown.

I hear the ringing axe; a sound goes by
Of children's merriment, a laugh of youths
And maidens in whose hearts
The violets are up.

And faith beyond these snows and lowering skies
Can look with unobstructed eye and see
The flush of orchard rows,
The waving of the corn.

E L N A.

MANY, oh, many times the boughs have clothed
Themselves with leaves, and these into their graves
Have dropped. The frost, the waves, the rattling storms
In everlasting war have worn the rocks,
And changed the confines of the hoary sea ;
The hum of mighty thoroughfares, the din
Of battle have gone up, the rains have rushed
Into the rivers ; these have sent their brown,
Fast-rolling volume roaring to the deep,
Thence to ascend, to rise, to fall in dews
And fruitful rains along the thirsty hills.

Through all, ah me ! do I remember well
That pale, cold forehead, and that rigid form
Dressed for the burial. I since then have grown
Gray-headed, lonely, sad. With faltering steps
My feet draw near the fearful boundary
Which separates these rivers, hills, and skies
From that Unseen which is a dread to all,
But home to thee, — thy everlasting home.

O unintelligible Spirit World !
Creation of man's weak, ghost-peopled brain,
Or real, tangible as this grass, these herds,
These fluttering snow-flakes or this shaggy glen
Through which the wild, white waters thunder down !
God only knows how far away, how near
Above our heads, around our daily walks,
Its valleys bloom, its mountains tower, its boughs
Hang fair in fruitage. There thou dwellest ; thou
Hast walked those hills and watched those placid streams
And breathed those airs so many, many years,
If airs and streams and hills may be where form
Is not, nor sense nor matter clog the soul.

Of all that earth before her children lays
To charm them into love of her sweet face,
Springtime and verdure and autumnal hues,
Unfolding leaves, dews, blossoms of the field,
Thou didst grow weary, — weary of thy books,
Prattle and glance of waters, song of birds,
Sunset and morning ; oh, tired, tired of all, —
The streams, the grass, the flowers, the human face ;
So thou didst fold thy hands and turn away,
With that sweet morning light upon thy hair.

Within the walls of that mysterious clime
Has God set windows looking toward the earth,
Through which thy clearer eye and quicker ear

May catch a gleam, a sound of that sad world
Buried in snows and gloom of rolling clouds,
Which gave thee breath and holds thy ashes now ?

The long still summers of the Spirit Land !
The joy, the wonder, and the mystery !
To what unutterable heights hast thou
Climbed from this fog and dust, these clouds and graves ?
Has not that purer light ensphered thy head
In splendors for my vision too intense,
And drawn into thine eyes from all the hours
Such starry majesties and awful calms
That I should fear to meet thy altered gaze ?
Oh, once well known on earth, remembered still,
Inexplicable now to me, I ask
What groves around thee murmur, to what stars
Dost thou lift up thy forehead, while to-night,
This night of gathering drifts and howling winds,
Earth seems one desolation, and the snow
Folds its white mantle round thy lonely grave ?

TWO LIVES.

A STORY of two lives, both sad, one swift
To death as any rose that from its stem
Falls while the dews of June are on its heart ;
The like of which earth has its multitudes,
That come like leaves or roses, fade and fall
Into their graves, and all the birds sing on.

He was a flaxen-haired and ruddy boy ;
She loved him with the love that mothers know,
And toiled to shield him from the chilling frosts
That fell with autumn, and the savage winds
That whirled the stinging snows along the hills
And piled them in the hollows. She was poor ;
And when the fever rose and flushed his cheek,
And he upon his pillow turned and moaned
All night, she watched beside him till the dawn
Reddened the east, and she could hear the tread
Of those who hastened to their daily tasks.
And when he grew to be a rosy lad,
Foremost in every sport to boyhood dear,

Or when beside the brook whose whirling pools
Held the shy, sparkling, eager trout he roved,
Or when, with gun across his shoulder laid,
He climbed the rocky hills and felt his blood
Leap to the sounding trumpet of the pines,
Her watchful heart ran after him untired.

So in the holy shadow of that love
He rose to man's estate, and still he wore
That smile and rosy look, his eye unchanged,
Blue as the dome that glowed above his head.
Then his light locks took on a darker tinge,
And in him woke that sad, delicious fire
Which burns in every bosom once in life.
He loved another, and, in turn beloved,
Was to that other joined till mighty Death
Should rend that holiest earthly bond away.

Then came the end. Oh, bitter, bitter end !
For when the days had grown into the months,
And these had rolled into the rounded year,
One called him at whose summons all must bow.
Life dropped the thread. They came and bore away
The useless thing from which the soul had looked
To see the rain and pleasant sunshine swell
The buds of twenty springtimes. He was gone.
And she who watched his budding infancy
And ripening youth with that maternal pride

And sleepless care which all men seeing, praise,
Never forgets those eyes, that step,— oh when
Do mothers' hearts forget their early dead ?—
And you may see her sitting mute and long,
With that great sorrow in her large brown eyes.
She sees men come and go, the golden-rod
Droop by the ragged wall, along the brook
The aster's purple torch flare in the wind,
And the bright goldfinch silently despoil
The thistle's downy ball until the fir
Pushes its cool, sharp shadow to her feet,
And the weird bat shakes out his leathern wings.
To look in her sad eyes the neighbors come ;
He never comes ; him she will see no more
Until she walks that other, vaster world,
Where, waking, some will see as they are seen,
And where, her heart has told her, God will solve
Some problems men have vainly prayed and toiled
Through ages long and dark to render plain ;
Where never grave is hollowed, never bell
Is tolled, or night falls on the happy hills.
So steals away that sad and wounded life
Nursing a voiceless pain ; a lonely brook
That down some verdureless autumnal vale,
Sending a dreamy and complaining voice
Up to the songless hills and wandering winds,
Over half-buried trunks and choking leaves,
Slides to its grave in the ingulfing sea ;

A mystery, a baffled, mournful thing,
And yet significant, of heart-break full ;
A lesson sent of God to all who see,
Because it holds the type of half the lives
That come and flit across this bright, sad world
As purposeless as shadows of the clouds
Run from the wind across the summer fields,
Or flowers abortive fall from orchard boughs.

SERMONS IN LEAVES.

A FITFUL sigh, a breath of fading groves
And dying flowers, a voice of sobbing brooks,
Moves up the pensive vale and perishes
Above the pines that guard those weedy graves.
The leaves come trembling down ; the sun pours forth
His bounteous smile along the ripened fields,
Far-shining hills, and many-colored vales :
Not Solomon in all his pomp of gold,
And costly cedar sweet from Lebanon,
Shone as this Northern World in these, its robes
Of ruby, amethyst, and almandine.
It is as if I saw the gates and walls
Of that unutterable, royal thing,
The New Jerusalem, coming down from God.
But as I muse, a wintry shadow creeps
Across the land. The sun in heaven withdraws
The wealth and sweetness of his kindly smile.
A chilly twilight settles round my heart.
You ask me why. Behold my answer. Here
Is evidence, to me invincible,
That God displays his love and wondrous skill
On things that last a day, an hour, then drop

In blank annihilation. These bright leaves
That flutter down to rot in miry graves,
How exquisitely he has fashioned them !
These cells minute which man's unaided eye
Marks not, so matched, harmonious, compact,
Their number infinite, each a little sea
Of pale-green liquid on whose noiseless tides
The primogenial, protoplastic germs
Flow in an endless circuit round and round, —
What human skill e'er wrought so wondrously ?

God's beauteous weeds, the lilies of the field,
See how they grow ; they toil not, neither spin,
And yet I say to you that Solomon
Was not arrayed so gloriously as these ;
Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass which is
To-day, to-morrow in the oven glows,
Will He not clothe you, ye of little faith ?
So runs the marvellous lesson of the Christ ;
It hath two sides, — one, turned to us, is strength
And sweetness ; but the other runneth thus :
If God so clothe the lilies of the field
To burn them ; if he deck the flowers and leaves
To match the sunset cloud and summer bow,
Then blasts and tramples into dirt and mire ;
If God so paint the rose, build cell on cell
Alive, compact, in order wonderful,
To pile the shapely trunk, oak, cedar, pine,

Only to blow them forth as sand is blown,
Then *man*, with his great brain and seeing eye,
That can the stars as in a balance weigh,
May not *he* die, perish that mighty brain,
Die, vanish as the lily and the grass
Blown by God's careless breath around the world ?
So speak the dying lilies, through His lips,
Two lessons, one of hope, one of despair ;
So leaves, that fading, falling, rustle out
Their still, sad sermon on the baffled heart ;
Faintly you hear it ; is it life or death ?
With forest leaf as lily ; God paints each
With care and power such as no painter knows,
Then tramples them ; they die, and live no more.

Oh, why should He work miracles like these,
Build up a temple wrought so marvellously,
Dome, spandrel, cyma, dental, portico,
Arch, column with acanthus overtrailed,
And all sweet forms, delicious curves and lines,
Only to blow one sudden, blighting blast
And whelm the wonder in the dust we tread ?
We cannot tell. No answer yet, more wise,
More sad, by any given. *We cannot tell.*
Behold where floats that gorgeous butterfly ;
God formed those brilliant wings, and painted them
To match the rainbow and the sunset gates ;
He sends abroad his blast ; the wonder drops

At once to nothingness, blank, absolute.
May man look forward to a brighter fate,—
Immortal man, whose body God hath shaped
With no more forethought, love, no nicer skill
Than the cold worm that dies beneath our feet,
Or fine-wrought leaf or dazzling butterfly
That drops unnoticed to its miry grave
To hover o'er the summer flowers no more ?
Man's conscience, reason, large, foreseeing brain,
You deem these raise him high above the ox
And rank him with Immortals, make him fast
As by a chain of gold to some unknown,
High, inconceivably sweet Second Life ;
Yet see how dark, fierce, faithless, profligate,
Bloody and devilish, worse than beast is man !
What proof in structure, tastes, proclivities,
Diseases, instincts, eye-glance, slavery
Abject to drunkenness, superstition, lust,
Organs abortive, rudimentary parts
That point to races, tribes, and forms of life,
Whelmed with the ages that could give them birth,
Miles deep beneath the waves and tilted rocks,
And in that known descent through centuries
Of vermin, drinking-skulls, and putrid smells,
From loins of frothing, screaming cannibals,—
In this, and that long, howling, beastly war
With tiger, wolf, starvation, cold, what proof
That the Darwinian holds the field, and will !

One Washington, a thousand Neros foul,
With ashes, blood, and smoke of shrieking Rome ;
One Milton, but a thousand snakes and wolves
That hiss and howl upon the giant's track ;
One Plato, but the countless common herd,
With little longing in their shallow brains
Beyond the meat that feeds their brutish blood.
Man's arts, discoveries, cities, temples, laws,
Grant all ; yet know the spider, ant, and bee,
No less than man, are prime geometers.
The birds both small and great, the giant swan,
The tiny wren and smaller humming-bird,
Swift through night's windy waste of dark and snow,
A thousand leagues of wind and dark and snow,
Chartless, unhelped by compass, sun, or star,
Cleave their sure way to other homes, abodes
Securer, milder suns and softer shades
By lonely lake or city's social hum.
Man's dignity ! Ah, narrow is the space
Which the sagacious elephant, baboon,
And dog must cross to touch the average man !
No ; from that undescribed, untravelled land
What signal flames across the yawning gulf ?
Among her myriads Nature hath no voice
Of insect, opening bud, or wandering wind
To fix conviction on the mind that man
May pass one step beyond the dusty grave.

TOWARD SUNSET.

PLEASANT it is to see a golden sun
Smile o'er a scene like this with tranquil eye ;
Pleasant to feel these soft winds round me run
O'er the bent grass with many a tender sigh ;
The streams that prattle down o'er root and stone
Are cheerful sights to me that am to die,
And turn my fading eyes
From autumn's pomp and spring's gay ministries.

The sure forerunner lurks along my veins
Of that dread hour which on all flesh must come ;
The gray, bluriéd afternoon alone remains
Of all the day that rose so fair in bloom ;
And from the western mountains o'er the plains
The shadows lengthen toward me, and the gloom
That waits to fold us all
Creeps nearer, cold and vast, — a mighty pall.

My early days, — how like these withered leaves !
Some faded tints alone can I recall ;
My early friends, — the wind of autumn grieves
Above their dust, and spring's dead glories fall ;

Haunted and desolate I bring my sheaves,
Mingled with weeds and thistles, light and small ;
 Oh, such am I that turn
Sad-eyed to see so near my sunset burn.

Wan is my brow with watching, seamed with care ;
The early lightness from my step is flown ;
The groves and waters warn me, and the air
 Is full of tongues that moan, *The day is done* ;
And inward tremblings make me all aware
 That I by some swift stream am hurried on,
 Till now I hear the roar
Of that great cataract plunging just before.

It saddens me to think the long, long night
 Draws nearer to enshroud and stifle all
That I have ever seen of fair and bright ;
 That I shall miss the song of birds, the call
Of waters and young winds, and all the light
 Which the great sun from his full urn lets fall
 On this green world of leaves
And grass, whose breast to meet his kisses heaves.

My gentle friends that haunt the wood and streams,
 Shall I miss all upon that mystic shore ?
Will not these wind-flowers tremble through my dreams,
 These trilliums follow through the shadowy door,

These kalmias haunt me with their rosy gleams,
These ferns their subtle perfumes round me pour,
These asters nod to me
Across the dim irremeable sea ?

Through that strange world beyond, the utmost stars
All-beauteous at the feet of God may shine,
And there the soul wash out its cruel scars
In the clear river of the peace divine ;
These birds and groves, scorning all earthly bars,
Will track my steps across the mystic line,
And the strong wind that swings
These mountain pines chase me on mournful wings.

Yes, these wild forest flowers, rich autumn hues,
And silvery clouds, this wide, sweet reach of sky,
The glorious sun whose smiles o'er all diffuse
Beauty and strength, will leave me when I die ;
Yet thou, dear absent world, thy lilies, dews,
Lost faces, tones, will live in memory,
And wave and sunset throw
Their ardors o'er the hills to which I go.

Though flesh must fail, it comforts me to know
Earth's lords and demigods, her dearest, best,
Have trod the self-same way that I must go ;
Have seen the shadows trooping to invest

The vales and mountains, seen the dark night grow
More dark and chill ; then, mounting to their rest
Above the fog and cold,
Have felt the eternal calms their heads infold.

Lo ! half the heavens is kindling with the zone
Of light which their ascending feet have made,—
Great names, though often to the world unknown,
Whose hearts were by a faith unfaltering stayed ;
They saw the awful shadow creeping on,
Heard death's tremendous summons undismayed,
And now yon track of light
Shows where the victors took their homeward flight.

JUNE.

TWO hours ago, —

Vanished, yet living and immortal hours, —
A golden cloud of music folded me ;
It was amidst the red and growing dawn,
While I, half dreaming, half awake, beheld
The cool, gray, silent spaces of my room
Become a stately wood of wondrous breadth,
With many a lofty arch and column tall ;
And down the arches of that stately wood,
And round its flowering boughs and columns tall,
And from the inmost depths of fragrant shade,
Was such a flash and crossing of bright wings,
And myriads of rival throats were joined
In such a war of tangled sweetesses,
As none have known, not in the world of dreams.

I woke, and through my open window flowed
A wave of rapture from those wingèd things
Of God which are a joy in every clime, —
Wild birds, the singers of the groves and fields,
The poets of the inmost gloom of woods.

Rising, I passed into the sea of light
Which washed the roofs, the hills, and rocky gates
That see the crystal Delaware creep down
Between two walls of sloping emerald.
The dandelions, burning through the sward,
In a star-glory bathed the shaven lawn ;
And streaming from the sun's exhaustless fount
A splendor rolled upon the woods, the fields,
Fierce, wonderful, far-blazing, passionate,
As if the towers of that resplendent town,
Jerusalem the Golden, Bride of Christ,
Dissolved and scattered by a look of God,
Should fall, a rain of jewels, on the hills,
And load each stem and leaf and spiry blade
With sapphire, jacinth, pearl, and quivering gold.

Adown the level lane the oriole
Flashed like a many-colored meteor,
To quench his orange, red, and golden fires
In the green mystery of the flowing elm,
Where a warm breeze from morning till the stars
Burned through heaven's purple, musically rocked
The cunning house that held its callow young
With motion as of drowsy-swinging seas.

The bobolink along the orchard whirled
His jangling rhapsody. The rosy South
Sent forth a gentle wind scarce palpable, —

So wondrous balmy, light, and sweet a wind,
And laying on my brow so soft a touch
That I can think that touch the kiss of one
Who walks the River's farther, fairer bank,
Once dearly loved on earth, remembered still,
And me remembering in her better home.

Sweet, sweet it is even with the grave so nigh, —
Oh, sweet, though care and change will eat away
The thinking brain, and dim all eyes, and pale
The rosiest cheek, to walk this beauteous world
A year, an hour; to take the bloom and breath
Of violets breaking through an April sod;
To see the morning from her ruby gates
Lean like a watching angel o'er the world;
To raise our foreheads to the holy fires
And awful pomp of stars, and know that he,
The Sinless, while he wandered homeless here,
Lifted those fathomless, pathetic eyes
To Aldebaran and the Pleiades,
Blazing that day as now; to rove the woods
Circled by Spring and her anemones;
To sleep, and dream of shores and mighty isles
Of flowers, strange, marvellous, resplendent things,
That never trembled in an earthly wind,
And never drank of earthly light or dew;
To dream, and then be shaken from our dreams
By birds upon the wing, birds on the bough,

Birds everywhere, low, loud, dull, dazzling birds,
And see the brave, full-breasted robin slide
Beneath the amelanchier's snowy crown ;
And over all that saddens, soothes, or thrills,
To know we walk a world still dear to God ;
That just behind this veil of light and air,
These groves and waters, odors, sounds, and clouds,
And this live wilderness of verdure, smiles
That greener summer, that eternal June.

IN PRAISE OF DEATH.

LET us, in patient hope and holy fear,
Take up our burden and rejoice for death ;
Here we walk painfully and darkly, here
We see not well, nor breathe untroubled breath.
To die is not to lose the form we wear
Amidst these fires that burn, these frosts that kill ;
Still ours the rugged brow or features fair
On yonder shore, — men, women, children still.

Death is an ordered step in life, one round
Set in the marvellous ladder we must climb
Till we in God's great liberties are found,
And all the warmth of that broad summer-time.
It is not *we* that die, not *we* that fall
Like those autumnal flowers which frosts consume ;
The mortal mask drops off, and that is all
Which goes to dust, — the dust that paves the tomb.

Shudder not at the grave, nor turn away
From its corruption, faint and sick at heart.
Those livid lips, that stark and ghastly clay,
Are but the cast-off clothes of what thou art.

When the grim coffin comes into the room,
 Possess thy soul ; it is the sombre door
That opens upward through the cold and gloom
 To that long springtime, — this, and nothing more.

When thou goest forth into the sleet and hail,
 To hear the pebbles smite that coffin-lid,
Then sink thou not to earth, nor loudly wail ;
 Beneath that mound thou leavest nothing hid
Save some poor faded finery of the soul,
 Which men once haply counted half divine ;
The eyes will fill, and — let the great bell toll,
 Why shouldst thou for an empty casket pine ?

Dread not those boundless fields of frozen space,
 Eternal glooms, and adamantine cold ;
God bids thee not those frightful deserts face,
 Nor through their horrors seek the streets of gold.
The world that death shall open on thine eyes
 Extends above all space and cold and frost ;
Mystic, unseen, world within world it lies
 Around our feet, by men is hourly crossed.

We shall not see the stars that glitter here ;
 The sun that warms these hills we shall not see ;
The moon will fade, a blind, abandoned sphere ;
 Blue overhead these skies no more will be ;

These hills and groves will from our vision pass ;
These dews, this grass, forget for us to glow ;
But sweeter dews, a more resplendent grass,
Clothe the mysterious vales to which we go.

O mystery beyond all mystery !
To die — that Other Life — so near, so far ;
We pass, we cast our burden down ; there we,
Not driven, not led, but rising, living, *are* ;
In death's appalling shades we sink, we wake,
Talk with our friends, hear waters run, winds blow ;
Wondering we see all things the fashion take
Of this green world, the things and men we know.

Fear not old age, its wrinkles dread not ; them
With his cold lips kind Death will kiss away ;
So, sunk in mire, or locked in stone, the gem
That, loosed and polished, yields the purest ray.
Bear with these trembling hands, these fading eyes
A little while ; they are but masks that hide
Thy unseen self, the man that never dies,
And all that mighty world, the world untried.

Only a little space, a few dead hours,
Shalt thou lie bound within that cold eclipse ;
Then he will come and touch thy slumbering powers,
And tinge with deathless life thy poor, dumb lips.

Thou shalt awake ; from prison passing, free,
In God's bright light exultant lift thy head,
And that short sleep and waking swift will be
Thy wondrous resurrection from the dead.

Yes, thou shalt sleep,—a brief and gentle sleep ;
Then thou, if thou hast nobly walked, shalt wake
Where those that love thee smile, and fountains leap,
And joys untold thy soul shall captive take.
And thou shalt look on beauty such as thou
Hast never seen rise on thy earthly dreams ;
Grand faces that all heaven seems melting through,
Sweet voices, statelier groves, and clearer streams

Will soothe thy griefs away. The willing years
Pour thy lost youth back on thy head again,
A deathless rose of life without the tears,
Without the exile, dregs, and toil and pain.
Oh, never perfume-sweetened vernal air,
Nor mortal brow such weight of beauty wore ;
Never were gifts so large or home so fair,
As those that wait thee on that farther shore.

There shalt thou meet the friend ordained for thee,
That perfect soul missed in the twilight here ;
Immortal love thy life and crown shall be
In the long summer of that sinless sphere.

Glory to God ! his Word is understood

More and yet more. Heaven through earth's torpid pores
Flows in, celestial light and heat and good ;
The angels, singing, enter at our doors !

SUNNY LANDS.

O H, many a longing fond is mine for lands beyond the sea,
With grander woods and larger stars, lands never seen by me ;
Strange sounds come floating down the night, of winds that whisper low
To woods that in the lap of one long golden summer glow.
I sit beneath the cocoa shade and turn with restful eyes
To other hills,—green hills from which the May-time never dies ;
From hidden valleys drenched in spice keen odors seaward blow ;
Along the sands, in flamy bands, the shy flamingoes go.
Behind, the huddled mangroves rise, a densely woven wall;
Before, the sea's eternal moan and endless laughter call.
What magic gifts, what fairy forms, ribbed, rosy, thorny things,
Upon the long, gray, level beach, with shining hands he flings !
Curled conchs and pebbles hyaline with crimson light shot through,

All hues of God's sweet Golden Town, Jerusalem the new;
I rove where rivers broad through dark, majestic forests glide,
And monstrous vines, with flowers of fire, dip down upon the tide;
A soft wind stirs the glancing crowns of peepul-tree and palm,
And every air that whispers there comes heavy with the balm
Born of some tangled jasmine bower withdrawn amid the green
Redundant life of fadeless woods where man was never seen.
Oh, hateful is the land of frost that breeds the desert snow,
The blasts that shake the northern hills, and stab me as they go;
Hateful these prisoned lakes and streams, grim, sullen lengths of ground,
These rivers chained in ringing ice, these mountains iron-bound,
To one who, in the frozen gloom that wraps a songless world,
With hands benumbed and eyes that flinch from stinging snows upwhirled,
Still walks the banian's stately maze and dreams his waking dreams

Of valleys red with orchis-flowers, of tropic groves and streams,
And keeps alive this hope, that he on some glad coming time
Shall hear the blue world of the sea roll round the Southern clime !

AMONG THE GODS.

WE harness the resplendent gods
That neither sicken, halt, nor die ;
For ours they leave their fair abodes
In ocean cave and curving sky.
The gods are ours, the strong, the grand,
We hear their tread, their thunderous call,
Lame Vulcan's forge, great Hermes' wand,
Jove's flaming bolt, — we know them all.

We leave the station to the right,
A call, a jar, an iron clash ;
We dip beneath the raven night,
Into the slanting rain we dash ;
Red glow the lamps that burn behind,
The headlight glitters white before,
The dizzy sparks spin down the wind,
The leagues from home grow more and more.

Night flaps against the trickling pane,
And down we roar against the night ;
Wild blazes by the counter train,
An earthquake's tramp, a whirlwind's might ;

We whirl into the dripping glen,
Between two jagged walls we fly ;
Around two hundred silent men
The echoes jangle, grind, and cry.

Some grasp the prize and walk with Hope
Down archways thick with tropic bloom ;
O'er broken plans some, pining, grope
In darkness like the inner tomb ;
One goes from scenes whose tones and eyes
Will sting him till he folds his hands
In that supreme of mysteries
Which God, God only understands.

One goes to clasp the soft white hand
Of her within whose tender eyes
And tones he sees a Holy Land,
The hills and groves of Paradise.
Come in, O blooming bridal pair,
Come, happy bridegroom, lily bride !
Through stormy night or sunny air
Move hand in hand and side by side.

To-day be jest and song and bloom,
All dreams that trance young Love the blind ;
Yet who may miss the evening gloom,
The wrinkled heart, the homesick mind ?

Come in, thou halt and crippled man ;
On trampled field, in tangled wood,
Where blood like mountain torrents ran,
Thou in the battle-roar hast stood.

And thou, with sad, averted face,
And trouble in thy woman's eye,
Can growing leagues or lightning's pace
Drown memories that may never die ?
Now by the dull canal we creep,
Flanked by the meadows flat and gray,
And now with scream and clash we leap
The violet threshold of the day ;

Now roar across the shuddering bridge
That gives a long, resentful groan,
The stretching hill whose pebbly ridge
Seems some old Jotun overthrown ;
Before, the shadows slow withdrawn
Roll backward on a whispering wind ;
Close on the dying night the Dawn
In ruby buskins runs behind.

We pass the glory of the wheat,
Beside the waking town we pass,
The cottage on the hillside sweet
With pansy beds and freshest grass, —

The cattle knee-deep in the pool,
Glens dark with firs and deep in moss,
The black pine shadows falling cool,
The alders in our wake that toss.

O comfort of the flying pines,
Of wind that sings and stream that foams !
O beauty of the climbing vines
That clasp a thousand happy homes !
Man's world ! Ah, here he hates and loves,
Here o'er his shattered idols grieves,
Builds his broad cities, plants his groves,
And lies beneath their fallen leaves.

Tearing the fringes of the cloud
Around the mountain's verge we clang ;
Where fogs that horn of granite shroud,
We, when a moment dies, shall hang.
O wondrous age ! O hands of might !
Ye thrust aside the ancient bars ;
The friendly gods our battles fight,
Oh, will they lift us to the stars ?

The village looms and backward starts,
Back slides the lake with mast and wave,
We grind the elder giants' hearts,
We trample on the Indian's grave ;

Now blaze from out two midnight walls
That, mocking, give us crash for crash ;
On purple flats the morning falls,
Across a golden sea we dash.

Along the graveyard's edge we race,
The sleeping shudder as we fly,
Mould from the coffin's inner face
Drops through the cavern once an eye ;
Now poised as if on thinnest air
Across the sea-deep gulf we flee,
And round the crumbling ledges where
An inch, and then — eternity !

Quick gleams the millpond's rosy glass,
Quick breaks the glory of the corn,
The pond, the corn as quickly pass,
A world is just as quickly born ;
While sad and low an undertone
Creeps up through rattle, jar, and scream
Of other wheels that speed us on
More fleetly than the wheels of steam.

A voice, a sign, above, around,
In streams and rocks, in leaves and dew,
In sky and earth a mystic sound
Of fading Old and dawning New.

New strength shall arm the coming hands,
Old fears shall die, old barriers yield,
Electric wheels shall cleave the lands
And plough the ocean's azure field.

Of this what hear and think the dead ?
Do Cyril and Hypatia know ?
When realms through stretching seas are wed
Does Shelley's talk more grandly flow ?
Do wheel and storm and battle send
Their signals to that shrouded Land ?
Uncertain fears must have an end,
The sable station looms at hand.

What is that life to come ? Where rise
The hills that Saul and Homer see ?
The land that cheats the sharpest eyes,
The clime to which the nations flee ?
Or is that clime a splendid dream
So sweet that our poor hearts must cling
Around it till its shadows seem
A living and a lasting thing ?

Where wanders she who left my side
That sad September's latest morn,
World-weary, closed her eyes and died
One dreadful hour before the dawn ?

What sees, what hears she now, what skies
Her in their golden deserts fold ?
What fields refresh her wondering eyes ?
Those eyes shall I again behold ?

BY THE SUSQUEHANNA.

SWEET, sweet and sad it is,
When the last drift is gone, to rove and feel
The light south wind with sigh and rosy kiss
Across my forehead steal.
The valleys smile on me
Through their dim dreams ; the long, majestic lines
Of hills, pine-black, rise still and regally ;
A silver river shines
Just at my feet. Along
Its lucid face the burnished shadows lie
Of pensive willows, elm-boles plumy, long,
And glories of the sky.
It is the hour when all
That sleeps awakes from sleep save man. He lies,
Nor heeds the spring's return, nor morning's call,
The dust upon his eyes.
Wings, sounds, all things that were
Save the dead, come or seem to come again,
Woods, fields, and waves with spring's quick pulses stir ;
Each fibre, every vein
Owns the electric thrill.

The wakening Power, the new-creating Breath
From vale to vale moves on, from hill to hill ;
With bloom life strangles death.
To watch the warm, clear light
Sparkle, and bathe these leaves and swelling buds ;
To breathe these airs that bring me in their flight
The scent of flowering woods,
The silence, flash, and song,
The stainless blue, this many-woven roof
Tremulous, sun-steeped, these columns tall and strong,
Are happiness enough.
I gaze and think of those
Who watched these quiet scenes in other years ;
For them these valleys smiled, these hills arose,
For them the tender spears
Of herb and grass and corn
Pierced the warm mould, a wonder strange as now ;
The violet looked up, the dews of morn
Trembled on blade and bough.
One that was dear to me —
I cannot think her dead, I call her gone —
Saw these broad vales, these hills as now I see,
The yellow light upon
These knolls and hollows sweet
With the wild rose and fern. The whispering breeze
Lifts the green boughs she saw, and at her feet
Spring the anemones.
Gone, oh, so long, so long !

I wonder if she ever thinks how green
These valleys lay, what golden wings of song
 Flashed on this quiet scene ;
 How bright the river glowed
In the white morning, the red evening light,
Or how above the dusky, dewy road
 The stars came out at night.
 Does she recall the spot,
The hour far off beneath life's faded skies,
When the gay, gold-eyed dandelions shot
 A bliss to childish eyes ?
 Thought asks, while the eye fills,
Has she forgot, walking that mystic shore,
Holding no wish to see the groves, the hills
 That she may walk no more ?
 When we grow tired, and lay
Our poor, sick heads down for that sleep, the last
And dreamless one, our troubles blown away,
 Losing and getting past,
 Do love and memory go,
Visions of earthly beauty, verdure, art,
Dew-blaze, the human face, the fountain's flow
 Failing with flesh and heart ?

JOHN'S PASSING WORLD.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."

STARS have burned out in heaven ; the granite bones
Of earth's cloud-piercing mountains crumble, fall
Before the pelting rain and prying frost.
Seas rolled and glittered where the lion roams,
The lordly forests drink the withered blood
Of those that bowed and perished at their roots.
No less what lurks within the human brain
Is food for change and ruin. Reason reels,
Love withers from the root, and memory dies ;
All, all is doomed ; the lusts, the strong desires
That on forbidden wine grow drunken, fail ;
Even these decay, ashes to ashes flung ;
The world, it passes with the lust thereof.

Love not the world. But why love not a world
That wears its beauty as a rose its bloom ?
To set the heart upon a thing so fair
With valleys, hills and groves, still lakes that glass
Rock-rooted pine and fern-fringed mountain wall ;

To cherish that rapt feeling and sublime
Which is to Worship sister eldest born,
Touched by whose fire we fix lost, wondering eyes
On that vast, dusky thing, the blazing Night,
Dumb, solemn, awful in her boundless pomp
And sad magnificence of world on world ;
To dote on grandeur, strength, hues, symmetry,
Art, eloquence,— is that to worship stones,
Or make us gods of silver, gold, or wood ?
Love these we may, nor draw God's frown on us,—
Love these, but only as expressive signs,
Shadows and shadowy images of One
Who well and wisely formed and governs all.

Then, while the earthly dream holds out, and we
Float down,— the stars all burning overhead,
And underfoot graves not a few, with bloom
Upon the bough and violets in the grass,—
Erect no altars, plant no lofty groves
Sacred to Baal. See that evening cloud,
Opal and amethyst and flaming gold ;
Fading, it melts into the gathering gloom,
The type of all man is, has been, shall be,
His boasted glory, strength, and length of days.

There is an inner as an outer death ;
A dying from one hour into the next ;
Hopes, fears, and feelings go, pass like a stream

Which was and is, yet cannot be the same ;
They fade, they change, they perish like the moon,
But not to be renewed, restored like her,
When she, a white ship on a waveless sea,
Sails glittering back to her abandoned throne ;
Or, as the waves that fret the yellow sands,
Two, though so like, can never be the same,
Though millions heap their snows upon the beach.
Baalbec put on the glory of the noon ;
The morning star o'er Antilibanus,
Trembling with bliss, hung not so beautiful.

Memento mori. Thicker rise the graves,
The graves are tenfold more than all the stars :
Palmyra lolled beneath her broad-leaved palms,
Drinking new wine and faring daintily —
The sun and wandering planets not alone,
All things revolve. The bridal, then the shroud ;
A stamp, a yell of multitudes, a roar
Of panthers in the amphitheatre ;
A fighter down ; ten thousand thumbs turned up ;
Dead sands and silence after — these remain.

Seven months upon the proudest height of all
By human foot attained, — oh, only seven ! —
There by the free accordant will of those
Who felt the strength and goodness of the man.
From that high place he saw the teeming lands

Dip forward from his feet to touch the line
Where the green world and brooding heavens meet :
The purple seas, swift ships, white cities grand,
The growing corn, the laden wharves he saw ;
The vision brightened round him as the day
Around the portals of the springing east ;
The night came down, drawn by that murderous ball ;
Then trembling and a cry as if the strong
Foundations of the earth were rent away,
And star and star together whirled and shocked.

Memento mori. Who may count the graves ?
What armies from their homes and pleasures march
To crowd those silent, vast Plutonian halls !
What will they hear or see, what gain or lose ?
Will they find God, see one remembered face,
One cry of joy or moan of misery hear ?
Spirits have neither form nor ear nor eye,
If the Church guesses right. Oh, do they think,
Remember our last kisses, these wild flowers,
Green paths and dews and snow, the tears they shed ?
This question, Lord, when shall I cease to ask,
Or when forget to tremble for the dead ?
Know they the hour when roses load the air
With perfume and the hues they loved so well,
Or guess the woe that seized us when we bowed,
Stunned, helpless, dumb, and heard the final sigh
Rise from the breast that could not heave again ?

Would they not love to see these violets
Sweeten the meadows with their human smile
Once more, again these running waters hear,
These plumy ferns, these mosses amber-green,
Golden and crimson over eldest rock
And tree, behold ? Would they not see once more
These pensive, still, divine autumnal days,
Whose tranquil hills and blazing splendors make
Earth seem as if God's angels walked her face ?
Or, travelling that long, mysterious road,
Have they attained some milder star, whose winds
Blow softly, and no winter's frosty breath
Darkens the vales or chills one tender thing ?
Or, sunk in those unfathomable calms
That drench the soul departed, are they filled
With joys that crowd from memory the joys,
Pains, faces, friendships, memories born of earth,
And every day is as the face of God, —
God's face shorn of the lightning, — every hour
A bringer of strong vintage to the soul,
A kindler of high thoughts, majestic dreams ;
Where summer in eternal roses sits
Throned on the mountains, to their summit's crown,
And every breeze is with the perfume faint,
And every wind a rolling harmony,
And on all heads an everlasting youth ?

Ages in heaven, yet ever growing young !
Life, life eternal ! Strange, oh, strange and sweet !
Carnage and fetters, bolts and tears and waste,
Wrong, hunger, wrinkles, doubt and shipwreck gone !
Oh, can the dream so sweet, the dream so grand,
Be *but* a dream foundationless, inane ?
Alas ! we neither hear nor see nor know ;
Dim are the gleams, confused and weak the sounds
That float around us from those mighty realms
Of death or life, that, wrapped in shadows, stretch
Beyond our little day of moans and songs.

Yet have we seen it written that there was
An earthquake great, and one came suddenly
Whose countenance was like lightning, and he rolled
From the grave's mouth the heavy stone away
And sat thereon, his raiment white as snow.
So to our troubled hearts, the winds, the groves,
The spring that brings its happy birds and flowers,
(Oh, birds and flowers, but not our precious dead !)
And wreckful ocean's blazing waste of waves,
We will go whispering this, while eyes grow dim,
Knees tremble, graves usurp the fields, the globe,
And the great Horror nearer, nearer creeps.

MIDSUMMER.

O F all the summers that to me have come with bloom
and song,
And wings that flash, and brooks that flee the grassy vales
along,
With waft of winds that leave at dusk their sweetest,
balmiest kiss
Upon the rose's heart of musk, the saddest one is this.

The light flows down the spacious heaven, it floods the
land, the sea, —
The pleasant light on vale and hill hides not its smile
from me ;
And never throbbed a lustier life through turf or tangled
wood,
And never will a bluer dome above the mountains brood.

But not to me as it hath been may be the seasons' flow,
Or smile of spring, or summer's green, or autumn's tranquil
glow ;
For in the deep, glad summer gone, the latest one that
died,
She, wise and calm of eye, looked o'er the landscape bright
and wide,

And when September's leaves grew pale she laid her down
and died.

With her a gladness passed from earth, a brightness from
its bloom,

And as the slow weeks roll away still deeper grows the
gloom.

Vain is the wish, but could I know where she is living now,
How flow the streams, how rise the hills, what verdure
clothes the bough,

If streams and hills may lie beyond this earthly snow and
rain,

If will, affection, may survive man's rocking, dying brain,
And when the poor, tired heart is still, thought, memory,
yet remain !

Nor I alone ; ten thousand more through these gay sum-
mer hours

Will miss a music from the streams, a glory from the
flowers,

And many a troubled thought will rise and bitter tear be
shed,

And strong hearts faint and fainter grow for thinking of
the dead ;

Trembling lest all they loved be lost in those unfathomed
depths

Wherein a God unknown his long, tremendous silence
keeps, —

A God unknowable his court in clouds and silence keeps.

THE FALL CRICKET.

TWO little gauzy wings
 Making a lonely sound,
A mournful voice that sings
Of earth's departing things
 Along the dusky ground.

When twilight cool and gray
 Creeps o'er the purple hills,
That lone, monotonous lay,
From near or far away,
 The brooding silence thrills.

From yonder hillside sere,
 Faint in an orange sky,
From pastures far or near,
And thickets dim, I hear
 That homeless voice go by.

Centuries and centuries,—
 A threnody the same
As ere in any breeze
Waved Mariposa's trees
 Or great Columbus came.

A sad, complaining sound,
To me it seems to say
How man is cypress-crowned,
How love in tears is drowned,
How all things pass away.

Thy youth is in its tomb,
That pleasant dream is o'er ;
To thee its strength will come,
For thee its roses bloom
No more, no more, no more.

Gone is the rosy light
That over all things lay,
Making the bright more bright,
Making a starrier night
End in a sunnier day.

Graves, graves, a world of graves !
We cannot walk or stand,—
Graves where the sunshine laves
The woods, and where the waves
Break on the lonely strand.

Graves in the grassy dell,
Sadder within the soul ;
A moan in the air, a knell,
In the heart a midnight bell
Making a deep, dull toll.

In the east and west
The lone graves of our love ;
Across the peaceful breast
Are weary hands at rest,
And the stars shine on above.

A restless wind that moans
Over a land of tombs,
Drifting the crumbled bones
Of those who sat on thrones, —
A stir of funeral plumes.

Dear eyes, sweet faces lean
Across the withered years,
Faces no longer seen,
For yonder mounds of green,
Dim through our falling tears.

So in the haunted night
The singer sings to me,
While all the hills are bright,
And the moon, like a galley white,
Is ploughing a silent sea.

A DREAM OF THE BLESSED DEAD.

WITHDRAWN into the central calms of God,
Where falls not heat or frost or any hail,
A goodly land of rivers clear and broad,
With many a grove and still, far-winding vale
Whose fountains sparkle and whose balms are shed
From boughs unfading, walk the Blessed Dead.

They faded from our eyes ; we call that death.

They trod no nether glooms Plutonian,
No sunless Hades drew them pale beneath :
The old life ended and the new began.
To sweeter waters, joys unknown before,
The closing eye was but the opening door.

Death has not robbed them of one look or grace
That drew us to their side while walking here ;
The thoughtful eye, the sweet peculiar face,
Are still the same in that untroubled sphere.
Fair in the flesh were they ; oh, fairer there
In that diviner light and softer air.

Know what it is to die. We close our eyes,
Earth and its faces pass, the heart grows still :
In that majestic world beyond we rise ;
Scenes, as of earthly mould, the vision fill, —
Cities and mountains, men and streams and vales,
And lustrous woods that bend to rosy gales.

Our glasses pierce the frosty deeps of space,
That mystic world eludes the keenest eye ;
It has among the outmost stars no place,
It blazes not along the nearer sky.
Let Knowledge sneer ; doubt not ; we never are
By land or sea from that green country far.

For all around us spreads the Spirit's World, --
So near, yet all unfelt, unheard, unseen ;
Across its hills our merchandise is whirled,
Our rivers foam and wave our maize-ears green
Above its streets ; and though we cannot see,
Our garments graze its awful tenantry.

The Blessed Dead have found eternal rest, —
No grinding toil, no fears, no wasting cares ;
And though each head lies pillow'd on His breast,
No slumbrous lapse of idle days is theirs ;
Within each heart a living ardor glows, —
Not dreams God gives his angels, but repose.

So have I seen a river broad and deep
And rapid, drawn by silver-margined isles
And meadows dewy green, with lordly sweep,
And under skies o'erflowed by summer smiles,
Glide to the sea. Noiseless and clear it rolls;
Such rest God's portion is to happy souls.

Eternal Beauty there her dwelling makes,
There is her court primeval, her delight,
No crawling thing the soul's disgust awakes,
No Satyr-shapes or bestial lips affright;
No poisonous streams through rotting sedges creep,
From flowery lairs no stinging serpents leap.

No tainted blood, no care-bewildered brain
Clips the free wing of quick and bounteous thought;
Truth never grasped on earth, or grasped with pain,
Comes from its envious covert half unsought;
No sombre fogs the soul's horizon stain,
God's darkest ways beneath its eye grow plain.

The Happy Dead,— ah, never, *never* dead!
Who walk so fair, who wear such youth as they?
Though death once pressed upon their eyes like lead,
He in their presence can no longer stay;
Sweet words,—oh, when were sweeter said or sung?—
To gather years in Heaven is growing young.

Where walk the Blessed Dead illusion dies,
The Spirit's World is pure reality ;
No lights delusive cheat those tearless eyes,
The Blessed Dead live not by fantasy ;
God leads by shadows, types, illusions here,
By naked truths in that diviner sphere.

The Spirit's World is wide. Therein is room
For all ten thousand earths can thither send ;
Realms swept by spicy winds, regions of bloom,
Forever deepening as they run, extend
Spaces no thought can grasp,— a summer land
Of streams and lily vales and mountains grand.

And there, for number like the ocean sands,
In races, peoples, ranks, societies,
Successive generations, tribes and bands,
Cities and nations, shining companies,—
No doubts to drive away, no fears to quell,
They walk with God, in love ineffable.

Oh, it was never flashed through thought or dream
What large and holy liberties are theirs,
What regal glories on their vision stream,
What golden songs convulse the heavenly airs ;
The clime they walk, the joys in which they dwell,
Our subtlest words are all too poor to tell.

Rising and setting suns are there unknown,
None say, *Make haste, comes on the gloomy night;*
Of that resplendent clime the Lord is sun ;
No envious cloud runs by to snatch his light :
But voices rise, *Wide is this happy strand,*
Clear are these streams, green is the Morning Land.

Calm are their eyes ; their thoughts, their joys are calm,
They never wish the long, still day would die,
Their years flow onward a melodious psalm,
The Blessed Dead know not satiety ;
For joys or faces gone they do not pine,
Nor ask in gloom when better days will shine.

They never grieve that they have left no name
Adown the ingulfing ages proudly borne ;
To feel and know Him nigh is sweetest fame,
Fairer than marble piles. They do not mourn
That o'er their bones howl the tumultuous waves,
Or savage briars hide their forgotten graves.

And some so long, so many, many years
Have walked those hills and watched those lucid streams,
That earth's most cruel wounds and fiery tears
Are things forgot, or half-remembered dreams,
On such a silvery stream of hours they glide ;
The storm is past, their hearts are satisfied.

They turn their eyes upon the heights that glow
Beyond them,— golden heights they yet must climb ;
Bright are those towering domes, but not with snow ;
Through heaven's soft air far glittering and sublime
They rise, and when those glorious heights are past,
Others ascend as glorious and as vast.

Oh, many in that long, bright summer stand,
Who little thought while doubting, pining here,
That they should ever see the goodly land,
Or fall of the celestial fountains hear ;
And when they saw the heavenly mountains rise,
What comfort seized them, oh, what sweet surprise !

Anon across that land of painless hours
Gleams from this dim, receded planet fall,
Faint flush of summer vales, faint breath of flowers,
Of earthly streams a distant, dying call, —
Sigh of remembered groves almost as fair
As those which bathe in that celestial air.

For much that is of earth most bright and pure
Pursues the absent soul. Tones, Alpine hues
And vastness, songful mornings such as cure
The heart-ache, flashing jewelry of dews,
Autumnal splendors, pressure of dear lips
Surviving all, outrun death's black eclipse.

Sometimes amid their easy toil they pause
And call the name of some remembered one
Whose heart was breaking when they stepped across
That dreadful threshold to the Land Unknown ;
And then their hearts within them burn to tell
That sorrowing one that all with them is well.

For though in such transcendent joys they dwell,
Still are the faces left behind them dear,
Dear the remembered kiss, the long farewell,
The gentle hands that smoothed their troubles here ;
And when God's chosen ones come flocking home,
They throng around to see if *these* are come.

Along those radiant mountains undefiled,
And in those happy vales the Blessed Dead
Find their lost loves. The mother clasps her child
Lamented long. They who were early wed,
And parted ere the bridal flowers grew pale,
There meet above the thunder and the hail.

And millions to that tranquil country go, —
Rosebuds just blushing through the calyx green,
Transplanted by a tender Hand to blow
In purer airs and valleys more serene ;
They know not that they budded here below ;
That here they faded, fell, they do not know.

Oh, well it is so soon to fail and die!
To cheat the envy of the sapping hours,
Never to wait and feel the veins grow dry,
To sleep, to wake among God's whitest flowers !
To lay the infant curls upon his breast,
And missing mother's kiss, climb to His rest !

BAALBEC.

PRESSING the feet of Antilibanus
With feet of radiant stone,
Thou didst arise a vision glorious,
And City of the Sun.

Thine were the palm and olive ; oh, the streams
That round thee gushed and sung
Made thee more fair than faces seen in dreams ;
The grape about thee clung.

No greener lawns than thine, no bluer skies
Than o'er thy temples shone.

No hills with summits bathed in richer dyes
Earth's many lands have known.

From the piled wharves and gay bazaars of Tyre
To thee the trader came
With precious stones, — the diamond's living fire,
The ruby's steady flame.

Numidia, seated by the Western Sea,
Brought thee her corn and gum,
Arabia and Phœnicia gave to thee
Gold, aloes, galbanum,

Murex and cumin, oil and thyine wood,
 Nard and the yellow tears
Of frankincense, fine flour, the fragrant blood
 Of balsam that adheres
To the goat's beard, and fleeces of the sheep
 That browse the hills of Crete,
Balls that the myrrh-bush and acacia weep,
 Fine linen, brass, and wheat.
Men walked like gods, dark, radiant women shone
 Within thy gilded halls,
And odorous lamps from silvery mirrors thrown
 On carven doors and walls
Made thy night-watches like a summer noon ;
 As when a light wind blows
O'er leagues of roses till the senses swoon,
 Thy nuptial music rose.
Fond human hearts beat in thee, loved and bled ;
 Man's anguish, woman's woe
Sat in thy homes ; mothers, their soft babes dead,
 Wept sorely, bending low.

In thee the war-horse pranced, the buckler gleamed ;
 Soon as the dawn began
To tinge thy towers, from thy broad gates outstreamed
 The long, dark caravan ;
O'er barren sands or swathed in mountain mist,
 Fronting the violet dawn,

It crept, lost in the gray, majestic East,
Heading for Ctesiphon,
Tadmor, Seleucia, and the golden land
Where from an empire's grave
Bagdad arose, Susa, fierce Samarcand,
And Cush by Elam's wave,—
Great climes whose marble bulls with human eyes
And eagle sweep of wings
Guarded kings, crowns, and gorgeous palaces
From breath of evil things,—

Far lands that heard the roaring Indus flood,
Fountains of Candahar,
And hills that bathed in orient splendors stood
Close to the Morning Star ;
Thence came with Indian fruits and cinnamon,
Silks shining from Cathay,
And gems that in a brown, rough-coated stone
Hoarded the dying day ;
Cloth of Cashmere, musk, storax, ebony,
Pearls from the sea-caves won,
Calamander, satin-wood, spice, ivory,
And cat's-eye from Ceylon.

Who reared thy stately stairs and porticos,
Stupendous piles ? Who rolled
Thy mighty stones together,— walls that rose
Thick-gemmed and deep in gold ?

What regal souls were thine whose genius flowed
 In fountain singing low,
 In wreath and arch and panel shone, or glowed
 In flute and ovolo ?
 Did they with eager hands reach forth for God
 Through that perennial night,
 Hoping the dim, uncertain path they trod
 Might wind across His light ?
 Did they count death their chief of woes, and lay
 Their dead within the tomb
 In tears such as the hopeless weep, or say,
 Smiling, *The life to come*
Is near and full and long ; to die is well ;
 Unending joys are there ;
Better than earthly rose is asphodel,
 Sweeter than stripes and care

Soft winds around serene Elysian Isles
 And fadeless meadows blown ;
There Nestor walks, there great Ulysses smiles,
 Ended is bale and moan.

A Sarsar blew ; thy sumptuous revelries,
 Feasts, music, gods are gone ;
 Thou art as Nineveh and Persepolis,
 Silent as Babylon.
 Why thus ? Oh let that Power who sits so high,
 Give answer if he will,

Granite must fail, stars totter from the sky,
Niagara's shout grow still.
Arcade, pavilion, dome, acanthus wreath,
Fold on voluptuous fold,
Columns on which men gazed and held their breath,
Ceilings that budded gold,

Altars and palaces, princes, temples, halls,
Gone, gone the silent way !
Above crushed arches, crumbled capitals,
The kids of Syria play ;
And a salt wind runs up, an ancient moan
From the Levantine wave
Rocks the broad, beechen zone of Lebanon,
And dies upon thy grave.

GETTING ON.

D EEM not success alone is found
With noise, and pomp, and outward show ;
Nor think that they alone are crowned
To whom men's willing praises flow.
For oft the veriest friends of God
Have lived uncheered, and weak, and poor,
Or, fainting and heartbroken, trod
A pathway rugged and obscure !

For them no stately ships divide,
With lusty prow, the weltering main ;
They not in gilded chariots ride,
They gather not the golden grain.
No, what ambition's children name
Success, is not for such as they ;
Neglected, poor, and dead to fame,
They fall and perish by the way.

Their glory is a galling cross,
That goes like fire into the soul ;
Their greatest gain is certain loss,
The floods around them break and roll.
But heart-sick, weary, and forlorn,
They hear the whispered comfort come :
God's brightest crown is sharpest thorn,
His grandest prize is martyrdom.

THE WORLD OF SPIRITS.

THOUGH some would tremble, none would doubt,
 Could they but see how near it lies,
Shadowing eternal leagues about
 Earth's pomps and graves and centuries.

No whisper from that hidden land
 Steals through the barrier raised between ;
There reaches forth no beckoning hand,
 No shadow by our own is seen.

The light that streams through endless space,
 From distant sun or farthest star,
And mightiest rivers in their race,
 Flow not where our departed are.

Around the globe our lightning flies,
 White fly our ships across the sea ;
We track the comet through the skies,
 We weigh the sun's immensity.

And yet no skill, no words of ours,
No flight, no call can touch the sense
Of those who, incorporeal powers,
Walk in that pure intelligence.

Still we may tread no foot of ground,
Pluck roses, stumble in the snow,
Except we press that mystic bound,
Nay, cross it, though we cannot know.

Into those skies our factories rise,
Our engines dash through golden thrones ;
In those calm eyes is no surprise,
There drop no loosened chalcedons.

Of robes no trail, of hearts no beat
We hear or feel, though these are nigh ;
Each world, in ignorance complete,
Sees not the other round it lie.

Their streets divide the mountain's mass,
Their temples shine amidst the sea,
Through sapphire palaces we pass,
Nor heed our royal company.

They throng our shut or open doors,
We, face to face, unconscious meet ;
Their steps are on our lawns, our floors,
But soundless fall ethereal feet.

Their steps, their tones we cannot hear
Through fleshly barriers interposed,
We cannot see them standing near
Because our inner eyes are closed.

These opened, we might turn like him
Who stood beside the ancient Seer,
And see the hosts of cherubim,
Rank over glittering rank, appear.

Oh, awful world ! dread Spirit Land !
Thy realm above, around us lies ;
Clasped in thy arms our mountains stand,
Thy sky tints dimly through our skies.

One little gust of wind too rough,
One draught of pleasure's cup too free,
Of wrinkles, aches, and cold enough, —
The blinds swing open and we see.

PASSED OUT OF SIGHT.

I GRIEVE not for my sister gone; much more
Do I rejoice that she has left a world
To her so cold and bare and colorless,
A life of sleepless nights and heavy days,
Till One drew nigh and took her hand and said,
Arise and follow me. And she arose
And, following, beheld, and saw his face
And form, that they were like the Son of God.

You scarce would choose the lot appointed her
Of God, for it was thorny. Thankless toil,
The weariness that steeps the bones when day
Drops in the west, which clings to every joint
And nerve when morning brightens in the east;
Anxiety for the bread that nourishes
The body, for the roof that holds at bay
The autumn rain and driving winter snow;
Care for the garments that must clothe the limbs

Of those who were her babes, and raised to hers
Blue, pleading eyes and little helpless hands,—
Such were her joy and portion in the world.

She loved all gentle things, the hues and forms
That clothe the earth with beauty, singing brooks
That leap into the sunshine with a shout
From the cool shadows of the fragrant woods,
The vines that shake their blue and golden flowers
Round open doors on dreamy summer noons,
And birds, and swelling buds that prophesy
The coming of the blithe ambrosial spring.
She took life's sharpness without moan or plaint,
Yet there came early to her sweet, calm eyes,
And settled there, a sad and weary look;
And when the end came, and the shadow fell
On those sad eyes, and her poor heart — the heart
That had endured so well and ached so long —
Grew still, there must have been a blessed gain.

And now her eyes on hill and grove and stream
Are closed, and I shall see her face no more.
She closed her eyes on this bright, lovely world
To wake in one more bright and beautiful
And green, — near, near, oh, nearer than men think !
A greener, larger, sweeter, better world.
And I have thought with what bewildered eyes
She looked around on those eternal hills,

And saw how endless, wonderful, exact,
Was the analogy of all that rose
Upon her view with all that she had seen
And felt while burdened here,— sun, moon, and clouds,
Winds, cities, mountains, fields and trees and men.
And she has said, *How different is death,—*
Death, whom I found no cruel, angry foe !
How different the life that lies beyond
The shroud, the coffin, and the tolling bell,
From all that preacher preached or singer sung
In that blind world which I shall walk no more !

AN ELEGY.

Talk as we will of immortality, there is an obstinate feeling that we end in death. All that we know of life is connected with a shape, a form, a body of materialism. — F. W. ROBERTSON.

We do not know that death does not end all. We have neither sense nor mental vision of a man after he dies. We do not find him. Where he is, or that he is at all, is absolutely unknown to us. — BISHOP FOSTER,
of M. E. Church.

SAD Life on earth ; far Life beyond its verge ;
One, stormy, vain, and swift, its meaning dim ;
The other rolled in clouds, beyond all thought.
Oh, life is sad ; so brief the golden space
Betwixt the twilights of the morn and eve !
The swallows go ; the roses die so soon ;
We cannot hear the thrushes sing for sighs.

Life is so solitary ; we may touch
The souls around us only as the rim
Of circle falls to circle, point to point.
That which in us is grandest, deepest, best,
The awful shadows, red baptismal fires,
Convulsing storms, gaunt famines of the soul,

Divine suggestions, aspirations high,—
These come and go, by all save us unguessed ;
We weep and laugh alone, alone we die,
Walk that long, long, eternal road alone.

Monon pros monon, moaned the sorrowing Greek,
Straining to pierce the cloudy realm of death
With those poor eyes. Forth to the dread Alone
Goes the alone from all the wind and hail.
As that last darkness rushes on the brain
The solitary soul across the sea
Drifts to the dread and solitary God,
Leaving the tent it dreamed in on the beach
To rot in storms and blow along the sands.

Life is so short ; so few and small the sheaves
Our hands may gather ere the shadows fall,
And we with eyelids weary go to sleep ;
So little time with Nature, hand in hand,
Pressing our eyes against the violets,
Awed by the gospel of unfolding leaves, —
We cannot see the crocuses for tears.

And such a growing trouble in the air,
Deeper with every parting of the snow
And sod, to heap the never-ending graves :
A rustle as of garments trailed unseen,
A whisper running through the empty rooms

Whence those we love went forth, silent, alone,
Into the night to stay so long, so long.
Oh, never word or touch or any sign ;
So many years beyond that frozen main,
And never hint that they remember us !

White curtains of the Everlasting Day,
Pushed earthward by the blowing breath of God,
From our sad eyes ye fold away our dead
As silently, as deep as if ye hung
Black curtains of the Everlasting Night.

Swifter than hungry eagles on the prey
From some high crag down launched on hissing wings,
With infinite hunger-pains and cryings wild,
All thoughtful souls fly through the mouldy grave,
The white Star-universe, and black Inane,
To find the dead ; the dead are never found.

Strange, if they think and love and care as then,
They may not lift one faintest voice to help
Those who fight on in doubt and trembling here,
Dumb, growing old in tears that fall for them.
Is God so bound by grim necessity,
Some iron law before, above all law,
Ghance, Fate, or God still higher than himself,
That his unseen may never cross his seen ?
Or are *they* dropped from being, we the fools

Of space and time and this phantasmal world ?
A little while we weep and laugh and toil ;
Much seems for man designed, above, around,
Upon a hundred shores, a thousand hills,
As many cities, the green length of woods ;
We deem the lavish sunshine lies *for us*.

A chilling cloud is blown across our eyes ;
We fail. We go ; we know not where we go ;
No world swings wide its silver door for us
Among those awful, palpitating stars,
Too well we know. As well we know there spreads
No other, nearer world beneath save this
Which gave us life and puffs that life away.
Then which way can we look for some green isle
Moored in the shoreless ocean's tumbling waste, —
A life to come, that heaven of which we prize ?
God pity, when our little barque moves down
On some sad night to shoot the deep abyss,
And we can never know how long the fall
Down those black jaws to where the roses blow.

One spring and then another since she died ;
Oh, might I know but this, — that still she *thinks*,
Or sometimes may draw nigh to look on me,
These branching evergreens and lustrous vines,
And hear the birds pour from these spicy boughs
The songs she loved in days that come no more !

The lilies prank the garden and the field ;
A day has left them stale, another kills.
What is there gone amiss ? Where is the wise ?
What is there may remain ? Not even that dome,
Blue, boundless, crystalline, sown with sun and star :
All shall be rolled together as a scroll,
Flow with the heat, die and dissolve in smoke ;
So saith the Word, the strong and dreadful God
Who, changing not, is yet a God of change,
And on the stones of ruin builds his throne, —
Life, verdure, beauty, rolling globes of light.

Yet, ah ! so sweet the endless song that hope
To some strange harp sings in the baffled soul ;
So beautiful and calm the heavenly hills
Above the hail, the thunder, and the snow,
So deep a zone of lilies round their sides,
We may not starve our souls on carob husks.

No, we will not with sackcloth gird our loins,
Nor on our heads the funeral ashes strew ;
Oh, rather down the all-defacing years,
Be it the calm or whirlwind, will we sing
That only by these wasteful fires that burn
The verdure from our way, these loads of pain,
Doubts, fears, and graves the noisy world heeds not
(For which it hath no help although it heed),
Are we made meet for greener shores than these,
And stiller valleys fanned by rosier winds !

NEAR THE SEA.

LIKE men who from their earthly places drop
So quietly that none give moan or tear,
And dust is spread upon their lips and eyes,
The dead catalpa blossoms, one by one,
Fall in the dallyings of an idle wind
Whose light wings wander here so silently
That not a murmur haunts the languid boughs,
Nor any leaf stirs on the slender spray.

So still the night, so voiceless, dead ; and yet
A mile away the great sea constantly
Utters that strange, unfathomable cry
To the wide air, the rocks, and hard gray sands ;
Then over barren fields and simmering roofs
Sends his long, mournful, inconsolable wail,
To find me here alone with Pain and Night,
The moon, and God's grand retinue of stars.

To me it is a sad, mysterious sound ;
Not hard it is to think the mighty sea
Is like to some of us, that his great heart
Knows some immortal sorrow, some deep wound

Which ever bleeds, cannot be healed, which he
Would not have healed because he would not thus
Forget the joys, the faces and the tones,
That were a heaven in days dead long ago,—
Lips once so sweet, never to speak again !

And still he lays his hoary forehead down
Against the jagged rocks and level sands,
Tangles his white beard in the glistening sands,
And sobs, and drenches the slow winds with tears,
Sending to me along the evening gloom
That vast and lamentable cry of pain.
Is it for grief that earth has lost her white
Primeval innocence, or that he weeps
For some green island world that with its groves,
Its fountains, its broad vales, its cities fair,
And forms more beautiful than human, went
Down to its grave within his caverns cold ?

Or can it be that like those sons of men
Who walk the earth in unknown multitudes,
He may not sleep for thinking of the dead ?
Myriads go sorrowing without a hope,
Saying, *The dead are perished ; when we part
In the death-room we never meet again.*
These hear the moaning of that other sea
Innavigable, dark, a thousand times
More deep than the Atlantic's deepest vale.

And oh, with streaming eyes and breaking hearts
And trembling hands they dredge the shallower coast,
Thinking to get some answer, though more faint,
Than airs that move the leaves on stillest nights,—
One little trinket, one poor lock of hair,
One whisper to the living from the dead,
To talk with them of life beyond these tears !
And their reward ; behold it ; handle it, —
The everlasting moaning of the waves
That break and break across their withered hearts ;
Waves felt and seen and heard by only them.

THE SUN.

BOUNDLESS, unchangeable, beaming, the likeness of
God the All maker,
Ever, forever, the heavens are singing and flashing his
glory ;
Ever the firmament showeth his handiwork limitless,
perfect ;
Day unto day hath a language swifter and stiller than
star-beams
Glinting on ripple and blossom and dews of the green-
lying meadow.
Night unto night through the Vast of the nebulous, ulti-
mate spaces
Whispers the manifold secret of knowledge that passes
our knowing.
Never hath speech been uttered, oh, never was cavern or
desert
Hidden so far, so forgotten that voices reverberant, choral,
Sounded not forth his praises and sang not the Infinite
Patience ;
Gone is their sound to the uttermost limits of form and
of being.

God for the Sun in the heavens hath set a pavilion
resplendent,
Brighter than palaces beam, more shining than raiment of
princes ;
Lo ! as a strong man girt for the race or the battle rejoices,
Lo ! as the bridegroom comes in the glory of youth from
his chamber,
So is the Sun in his going, — he runneth his circuit
rejoicing.

Bright are his feet on the mountains ; he scorcheth the
eye with their splendor ;
Father of congregate vapors and rivers that gladden the
valleys ;
Sweetness is he to the rose and strength to Behemoth the
dreadful,
Swiftness and beauty and might to the wings of the cloud-
cleaving eagle.
His are the purple of Sharon and dew-spangled pastures
of Bashan,
Greenness and skipping of young lambs, ewe-bleat and
lowing of cattle,
There by the fountains of God in the chrysolite meadows
of Bashan.

Silently, cell upon cell, he buildeth the cedars majestic
Low in the wind of the West on the shoulders of Lebanon
sighing ;

His are the bow and the cloud, his the wail and the
throbbing of Ocean,
Whirlwind and ruin ; he blanches the world with the
crack of the thunder.
Never, concealed from his gaze hath a gossamer streamed
on the morning,
Glimmered the wing of a moth or glistened a leaf of the
forest ;
And as his lidless eye runs on through the deserts of
heaven,
On through the frightful waste of the Galaxy's frozen
abysses,
Firing the hair of the comet and meting the leagues of its
marches,
Wasting his beams on the outstretching, limitless black-
ness of darkness,
Where like dust in a room float his golden-haired children
the planets,
Counting the ripples, the green multitudinous graves of
the peoples,
Say, hath the eye ever looked on the land of the dreaded
Hereafter,
Country of separate spirits, — Hades the keeper of
secrets,
Into whose bosom the nations are drawn as the rivers to
Ocean ?
Ask ; could he hear, could he speak, oh, what would
the Light-giver answer ?

Would we not hush our laughter and pause in our feasting and getting,—

Saying, *The hand comes back that moved on the wall of Belshazzar,*

Comes in the Sun's sad No rolled down through the terrible silence,

Stilling the harpings of Oceau and cleaving the soul like an earthquake?

BEYOND.

O FRIEND unknown, whose face I never see,
Yearning to know what death's long night may mean,
And lift that veil of tenfold mystery
Which hides the mighty realm of Life Unseen,

Let go thy fears ! The world we walk is not
What to our dim and troubled eyes it seems ;
Its most enduring forms and happiest lot
Are of such texture as we see in dreams.

Here God leads by illusion ; but behind
These fleeting hues and empty images
The eye, with earthly dust no longer blind,
That Real World and all its wonder sees.

Not on some distant star, some dazzling sun,
Far sunk within the cold and desolate skies,
That world, with golden blossoms overrun,
And all its swarming populations, lies.

But thou shalt know, when years have died, how near
 Its streams, clear-rolling, sang around thy feet,
While thou didst go in fear and trembling here,
 Nor heed its fragrant lawns and sunshine sweet.

Dread not to die! It is as when one goes
 From some dim-curtained and ill-garnished room
To one whose mirrors flash, whose music flows,
 Whose new-blown roses all the air perfume.

Yes, thou shalt rise to friends and tender looks,
 And groves that feel the warm wind's spicy breath,
The pomp of blooming hills, the lapse of brooks,
 The throngs of men, to know there is no death.

Oh, faring on, poor, baffled, sad, and old,
 Stumbling on graves and dimmed with battle-scars,
Better such creed than fame or vaults of gold,
 Or wings to soar with Science through the stars.

THE STORM KING.

BY flashing day and spangled night
Blaze of summer, glare of winter white,
Aloft, alone,
On his mighty pedestal of stone,
His immemorial throne,
Sitteth the Storm King.
Bones of rock, and cedar hair,
Hair of cedar, laurel, aspen, oak,
Ampelopsis, bramble, fern,
Down his lusty shoulders rolled,
By the blowing west wind rippled, rolled ;
Shoulders by the shattering thunder scarred,
Gnawed by the teeth of rain,
Hurricane, wind, and frost,
Wearing his centuries like a flower, he sits ;
Has sat since the Master Builder drew
The shallow floods from all the weltering waste,
And piled in rock-rimmed, dolorous, thundering seas.

Over the sunshine's lucid meadows far
Looks he northward, sombre, silent, stern,
Across a thousand vales, as many streams,
Unfathomable gulfs of verdure thronged

With strenuous life, vein, pore, and myriad cell,
Shining villas, shaven lawns, fruited fields
Where men plough and reap and hoard,
Then lie beneath the sod their hands have clothed
With verdure, sweetness, gardens, villages ;
Lifts his shaggy, spectral arms,
And through the driving rain and sunshine clear
Beckons to his strong compeers that sit
Among the Catskills high on purple thrones ;
Sees a thousand groves
Wave, grow old, and die,
A thousand vineyards bud, and flush, and blacken
Into the aromatic,
Deep-shouldered, perfect cluster ;
Sees the airy spires of Newburgh gleam,
Till the great stars come out, and morn
Walks with light feet the cool and ruby east ;
Hears low, low, low, under the howl of winds,
Moan of gray, droning, melancholy rains,
And endless clapping of the silvery hands
Of his innumerable laughing leaves,
The joy and wailing of great bells
Rung for the bridal train, tolled for the dead ;
Sees the emulous, majestic, swift,
Hard-panting steamboats cleave the glassy bay.

In the spring his dull, cold veins
Kindle, sparkle, and throb ;

In the spring his seamed, unscalable sides
Blaze with violets, flutter, flash, and blaze
With rosy fires of azalea,
Kalmia's far-running, never-scorching flames ;
The scarlet-flaring lamps of columbines
Around his forehead, gray and thunder-scarred,
Swing in the happy south wind numberless ;
Along that gray, rough forehead I have seen
The gold corydalis trail its dewy hair,
And the pale wind-flower in his steep-walled dells
Nestle and tremble to heaven's lightest breath.

In the spring the gentle mayflower
From the brown leaves that clothe his stony feet
Opens the eyelids of its sweet, wild eye
To the blue, benignant eye of heaven,
And upbreathes its grateful balms.
In summer he is beautiful ;
No one may tell how beautiful,
Nor how green and starry falls the robe
That down his Atlantean frame
Through the still, jewelled mornings floats and flows.
In autumn beautiful is Storm King. A robe
Of bronze and orange and clear-flowing gold,
Striped and fringed with dusky emerald,
To his firm, flinty feet rolls murmuring.
In winter beautiful is Storm King, —
A beauty faultless, silvery, glacial, fierce ;

A mantle snowy, radiant, clear as heaven,
Spotless whiteness, aching brightness, sparkles, flashes,
From his aged shoulders flows
Silent, wonderful, to his aged feet :
Splendors and shadows blue,—
Bluer the dome of heaven never shone.

Many a white, high-vaulted day,
Many a lonely night,
While the large, gold-haired, sparkling stars
Come out to laud and sing
Together, shaking heaven's firm-pillared halls
With melodies unheard on earth,
Undreamed of by the busy throngs of earth,
The ice-wind strong that down from Greenland howls,
The ice-wind wild that roars from Labrador,
His stainless mantle rends and puffs,
Smiting his iron brow with iron wings.

He hears, he sees, yet this tremendous Sphinx
With thrice-sealed lips along the Hudson glooms ;
Dumb, dumb, dumb, yet well he hears and feels,
Feels round his feet the lordly river creep,
Cling and murmur, climb and fall ;
On blazing nights when the bright, bitter North
Through waters, fields, and ways and dwellings shoots
A clashing hardness as of adamant,
He feels, he hears the resolute, massive tread

Of the harnessed giant
Pressing that tremulous, long cry of pain
From the expostulating rail ;
Or on those gala days
Which mark the nation's stormy birth,
Or birth of our great Washington,
Hears the vauntful, bellowed threats,
Gigantic, arrogant, joyous crashes
Of the West Point cannon-thunder
Up through his heart of many-folded rock
Leap, thrill on thrill, electric.
But you may shriek your soul out in his ear,
You he will never answer,
Never speak nor whisper, save
As madman or rapt prophet bowed
To himself may whisper
Under the still and solemn cope of night,
Or when the awful dawn
Deepens and quivers up the silent east.
Never, never will he tell you
In what cradle vast and old,
With what giant lullabies
Of tempest, thunder, and volcanic throes
From the nebular, rudimental fire
God rocked him to vastness, beauty, form ;
Or how the steaming lands
Out of the barren waters stood
With sudden boskage bright, and dense with palms ;

Nor from what deeps of primal ooze,
Pluvial flats, and quaking fens,
Rose dinotherium dread and mammoth huge,
To shake the rainy waste
With sea-like bellow and slow earthquake tread ;
Nor from what slimy caves
Megalosaur and pterodactyl crawled
To wage loud war along the sailless deeps,
And tinge the tepid floods
With spout and splash and hissing swirl of blood
Of narwhal, serpent huge, and saurian mailed.

He has watched the tribes of men
Come and go,—Greece, Egypt, Rome,
Goth, Red-man, Hittite, Carthaginian,—
But not by word or any sign
Will he tell what world unknown
(Oh that those grim stone lips might answer me,
Since lips of angels, men, and gods are dumb !)
Opens its cloudy doors to take
The trembling or ecstatic ghosts,
The imponderable, viewless shades
Of earth's millions, toiling, weeping, passing,
Till the silent hosts of Hades
Are more in number than the gray-sea sands.

AWAKING.

A POWER words cannot name
Through branch and root, earth, air, and water thrills,
Moves in the blood, and like a subtle flame
Quivers along the hills.

The world we cannot see,
The Spirit's world so near, above, around,
From the glad sky is reaching down to me,
And upward through the ground.

From yonder mountain sides,
From hollows where the drumming partridge springs,
From beams and winds, into my being slides
A sense of budding things.

Along the river-banks
Slumbrous, expectant, strown with warm gray sands,
The dog-tooth violet's sharp and crowded ranks
Thrust up their mottled hands.

The loosened brooklet goes
With many a bubbling fall and pebbly turn
Through pastures where the trembling wind-flower glows,
And curls the fronded fern.

Faint voices reach my ear,
That steal the world and half its pain away ;
Voices that only in the soul we hear, —
Come, walk the woods to-day.

That call I hear, and rise ;
Beneath this roof of murmurous pines I pause ;
Cool are these shades, a thousand violet-eyes
Smile from this floor of moss !

Rolled from these lofty boughs,
Moans as of some far organ-pipe I hear ;
Men in the world's green prime in such a house
Knelt, thinking God was near.

Well might they look in awe
On Him who reared these columns tall and strong,
Who giveth life, and whose eternal law
Speaks here in leaves and song.

Heaven flings one shining door
Wide open, showers her choicest hues and balms
On men, bids their work-weary spirits soar,
And bathe in God's great calms.

A mystic warmth, a glow
Flows with my blood subtler than oldest wine,
Oh, could I always hear, see, feel as now,
 To live would be divine !

Buds burst, brooks sing, flash wings,
A wind stirs; to its pinions as they pass,
From the near hills and farther meadows, clings
 A scent of starting grass.

O wondrous mystery
Of life and death ! O maze without an end !
I feel your breath, your might and splendor see,—
 When shall I comprehend ?

THE STILL, TREMENDOUS NIGHT.

THE still, tremendous night takes her lone stand
High on the circle of the world. No star
Looks from those gulfs of sullen cloud afar ;
Darkness and silence over all the land,
And both how deep and dreadful! One sad bird,
Ill-omened bird, as if he were alone
In all the world, pierces with doleful moan
The solid dark ; no other sound is heard.

But through the tingling silence on my ear
Creep many voices, not of men or time
Or winds or seas, but of that shadowy clime
Whither all things that help or bind us here
Descend, borne downward by the mighty Years ;
The smiles of absent faces light my room ;
Eyes that have long been dust the heavy gloom
Put back ; the friend that perished reappears.

When fails the sun, forth breaks a better light ;
The day departs, heaven's lilies bend to me ;
I touch the frontiers of eternity
With hands that stretch into the awful night.
In darkness the invisible world draws nigh ;
When shadows deepen round me, God, the dead,
Approach ; I feel a breath ; I hear a tread
Of feet unseen ; light garments rustle by.

Oh, this strange leaning towards infinitude !
Dread kinship with eternity ! No rest
Hath time for that mysterious, lonely guest
The soul, which finds in all earth's round no food
To quench its divine hunger, but like one
Exiled and friendless, roves from shore to shore
In pain and broken-hearted, evermore
Seeking a home and peace, but finding none.

A SOLEMN MUSIC FLOWING.

A SOLEMN music flowing, winding, stealing
From day's blue gulfs or night's star-sown domain
Pursues me, as of chimes whose distant pealing
Flows down the twilight air a golden rain.
It says, *Lo ! in the withered days behind thee*
Thy life with all its bloom lies dead and cold ;
All things are taken, fail ; death's frost will bind thee,
Night wrap the shining mountains fold on fold.

Then, looking back through mournful eyes, my treasures
I see strown up and down the faded years ;
Green hills and valleys arched with stainless azures,
Dear eyes that death's long severance more endears ;
The golden autumns, calm, colossal summers,
The aspirations high, the dazzling dreams,
The call of birds, the trembling forest murmurs,
The fragrant airs, the rush of mountain streams.

Yonder they lie,— the long-lost Mays, the meadows
Starry with blossoms, flashing in the dew;
The hidden valley, beautiful with shadows
Whose grateful coolness oft my footsteps drew;
The paths that opened upward, beckoning chances
To do, to conquer, rise to grander heights;
Of eyes weighed down by dust, the heavenly glances
Still following where I go, celestial lights.

And then another voice more sweet and tender,
A holier music filling brain and heart,
Saying, The perished joys, the faded splendor
Shall to a fairer life around thee start
Soon as thy feet have crossed that chilly river
To the great peace that holds the farther side,
Leaving the filmy eye, the sick heart's fever,
The idols broken, and the streams that dried,

To find among those green and happy valleys
Thy dead youth bounding through thy veins again,
With all of sweet that was, without the chalice
Of rue, the palsied hand, the labor rain.
So I my way beneath the shadow groping,
While the great Night draws nearer, forward go,
Little believing, sadly seeking, hoping,
Cheered by that inward Voice, sweet, sweet and low.

AT WATCH HILL

FOAM and a horror of sound like the noise of the
muster of thunders,
And from the white fog-wall the shipwrecking, ravenous
vastness,
Swift to the long gray sand-line, crowding each other and
trampling,
Swift to the gray, low shore like horsemen rushing to
battle,
Glitter below me the helmeted hosts of the shouting
Atlantic,
Break on the rocks the angry ranks of the cavernous
ocean.

Cries of the merciless sea! Ye voices that roll from
abysses
Not of the earth or the heavens, prophetic, disconsolate
voices!
Moaning ye seem to say as I listen, *O millions departed,*
Ye that in sea-gulfs slumber or moulder on desert or
prairie,

*Waiting that terrible summons, the blast of the Angel of
Judgment,*
*Out of the durance of death, his frost and silencee, to loose
you ;*
*Ye that like roses unfolding, thick-pearled with the dews
of the morning ;*
*Grew, and like roses fell from the arms of mothers
lamenting ;*
*Ye that fall off like leaves in the stillness of shadowy
forests*
*While the hushed valleys lie dreaming in crimson and
ruby of autumn ;*
*Ye that pass out at the portal of carnage, with thunder
of cannon,*
*Waiting a far-away hour when the call of the Angel shall
rouse you*
*Out of a blood-stiffened shroud, the darkness of battle and
ruin, —*
Will ye, will ye awake ? Is death like life an illusion ?
*Or is the world of the Dead, dark world that we mention
and tremble,*
*Spread around us unseen, but near as the grass and the
sunshine,*
*Not a dream of the Mystic, or phantom of darkness and
beauty,*
*But as the earthquake real, and fixed as the roots of the
mountains ?*

So art thou calling, calling, O sea, as I mournfully listen
To the white surge that dies on thy bastions of granite
 disastrous,
As if the dead of ages, the hosts that have passed into
 darkness,
Hailed me out of the darkness, the kingdom of Night and
 of Silence,
Called from the sunless sea, the windless, invisible
 Ocean
That all around us rolls, whirling high its impalpable
 billows,—
As if that sunless sea through the lips of the tossing
 Atlantic
Foaming, and fretting the gray sands, called me in audible
 voices.

Back from the shore I turn through the land, the joyless
 and stunted
Oaks and high-piled sands, aweary, troubled, and haunted,
Followed by laughters and wailings sent up from the
 grave of the ages
As of the millions of millions gone forth through the
 shadowy portal
Into the shoreless ocean of Night whither all that we
 cherish,
Love most, fight for, live for, the sweetness of earth and
 the beauty,

Goes and is not, borne down on the sweep of the murmurless River.

Dews and leaves of the forest and stars of the night, can they number

Those who are sleeping the sleep whose chains no thunder can loosen,

Those whose eyes to us were sweeter than breezes of evening

Blowing from gardens of roses and forests of orange and citron ?

Wearily onward I go, tired, tired of the birds and the sunshine,

Tired of the fields and trees, the light and the rolling of ocean,

Dumbly calling to One who is mighty, a helper in trouble:

*Take me, I cry, from the paw of the lion, remember me,
take me*

*Out of the way of the whirlwind, cold, heart-hunger, and
horror,*

*Wrath and the war of tongues, the days that are barren
and evil;*

*In the clear waves of thy ocean of peace bathe, lose me,
content me.*

Some who were dearer than fall of fountains or roses of summer,

Springtime or morning to me, apart in the silence are walking;

*On what island of spice, clear-domed with the starriest
azure,*

*Calm as a sunset sea washing headlands of gold and of
amber,—*

*Island of God, with glory of jasper and chrysolite girdled,
Will they await me coming, and hail and remember with
kisses?*

IO PÆAN.

LET me go hence as goes
The good man when he lays him down to die,
Upon the blazing sands, the frozen snows,
Closing a weary eye ;

Leaving the traffic loud
Above all prayers and psalms, the grave, the knell,
The fool, of his poor dole of knowledge proud,
The doubt that is as hell ;

To see, through filmless eyes,
Bright forms that walk above all clouds serene ;
To look on grander mansions, softer skies,
Hills dressed in richer green ;

Fountains that ever send
A music up to soothe world-weary ears ;
A clime wherein all trouble hath an end, —
Life separate from tears.

Farewell, familiar earth !
Ye streams and hills, a long and glad farewell !
Winds that among the fragrant boughs make mirth,
Blossoms of rock and dell !

Keep thy grand harmonies,
Receding Mother ! Joy ! thou growest dim !
Take thy dear summers, flowers, and melodies, —
Give me the cherubim !

Like garments from me fall
This flesh and blood, this ache and weariness ;
Lights flash, perfumes float by, the angels call ;
On to their arms I press.

I am not the stark, cold thing
Over whose pallid face you heaped the sod,
I walk, I see ; trees wave and fountains sing ;
Earth and her fogs — then God.

THE CAMPING GROUND.

THE plains where earth's grand armies camp are
noiseless;

The tents in which at last her mightiest throngs
Lie down are thick with mould. The halls are voiceless
That hold the smiting hands and thundering tongues :
And, all return through thy strong gates denying
To beggar scorned or king with jewelled head,
Thou in thy everlasting hush art lying
All round us, ancient City of the Dead.

The lips that stung to life the drowsy nations,
The hand that rocked the tyrant's iron throne,
Or gave to art its grandest revelations,
To thee depart, dumb, empty, white, alone.
The foot that scales the steep ascent to glory,
The heart whose love is larger than the sea,
The cheek that shames the rose, the temples hoary,
All find a rest secure, long, deep, in thee.

No rival schools, no scorn of classes jealous
 Mar this unbribed, serene democracy ;
Not for the flying slave the blood-hound bellows ;
 The jail-door swings, the prisoner is free.
These empty sockets mock earth's fierce ambitions,
 Its noisy pomp these crumbling skulls deride ;
Hope's dazzling dreams, power's sensual fruitions,
 What are they here ? Where now is human pride ?

That tongue once cut you like a whetted sabre ;
 Dread not what venom it has left to spill.
That little heap of dust was once your neighbor,
 Rich, feasted, purse-proud ; ponder and be still.
Here meet earth's mighty warriors ; not the rattle
 Of drums and wheels, nor cannon's frightful roar,
Nor heaven-shattering broadside, crash of battle,
 From this enchanted sleep shall wake them more.

Here meet the hearts renowned in love, whom, parted
 By evil fates, we see through misty eyes ;
She whom the cloister took, all broken-hearted,
 How restful by her Abelard she lies !
Great Camoens, whose life love sealed to sorrow,
 Knows he how near him sleeps his fair Katrine ;
How thick a dust from these clay chambers narrow
 Lies heaped on " sweetest eyes were ever seen " ?

The children here, each in its quiet chamber,
 Away from mother's arms sleep, oh, so well !
No more to mother's lap the young feet clamber,
 No kiss to give, no little griefs to tell !
Gold-brown and plenteous locks had little Alice,
 Round Katie's bed we felt the angels stand ;
Now, no fond message sent from cot or palace
 Would reach them, painless in the Painless Land.

And little Louis moaned and tossed with fever,
 He went,— a white rose in his baby hand ;
Hermas passed through the foam-gate of the river,
 From his drenched locks we combed the glistening sand,
Oh, weeping, weeping ! That dread, dusky Portal
 Received him. Him we not again shall see,
Nor take his hand in ours, till this frail mortal
 Is lost in that great immortality.

Yet these tremendous walls shall once be shaken,
 Crumble these gates before a mighty arm,
Their king fall, by a Stronger overtaken
 At his own threshold, pallid with alarm.
So taught He while they heard in pious wonder,—
 Those simple fishermen of Galilee,
Who, in the life that throbbed that coarse garb under,
 Saw Hope's clear star rise o'er humanity.

So preach we, so believe we, seeking, groping,
Along a perilous and rugged way,
Cast down but not destroyed, despairing, hoping,
Till we emerge into the promised Day.
Whoe'er thou art, rejoice ! though pierced and weeping
For sunken pearls no diver brings to shore ;
Ambushed by fears, still, still in memory keeping
Whose feet have passed these awful gates before.

THE CHRISTIAN ARGUMENT.

YOUR teachers taught (and you have followed them,
Holding their faith, shallow and comfortless)
That Nature's endless round, — her wondrous Book,
Adorned by God's own hand, and million-leaved,
The fly, the worm, drawn from their winter sleep,
The leafless tree breaking to sudden bloom,
The kernel rising bladed from its grave,
To man are promise of eternal days.

Behold this little chrysalis, so dry,
Lifeless, and dull, fixed to the naked twig,
All winter shaken by the icy blast.
You place it where the warming sunbeam bathes
Its husky covering ; it wakes, it stirs,
A living thing breaks forth as from a tomb,
It waves its delicately painted plumes
And, spreading their gay colors to the sun,
Floats down the lawn a wingèd, breathing star.

And does that frail and gaudy idler sing
To thee the pleasant song of endless Life ?
Or that sad, restless thing, the human soul,

Whose glance can pierce the dusky past, and cleave
On tireless wing the gulf of years to come, —
Seest thou in that a sign to comfort thee,
That man shall live beyond this grass and snow ?
The human-visaged ape, the elephant,
The beaver, ant, and dog have often shamed
The boasted powers, wisdom, and skill of man, —
In faithfulness and patience more than he,
Than he less bloody, cruel, beastly, base.
Yet Christians hold the noblest brute expires
Like flame, to wake, to feel, to be no more.
Hence, then, we draw no comfortable proof
That man beyond this short, uncertain term
May pass one step. No intellectual range,
No flight of that mysterious soul, which seems
To walk among the stars as one of them,
No grasp of giant memory, no skill
From truth's true gold to blow the hollow chaff,
Nor corn into the furrow dropped that seems
To die, then pushes up the living blade,
Nor spring-burst bright, nor shrivelled chrysalis
Unfolding sudden rainbow wings, makes sure
That man from death's tremendous sleep may wake,
Or feel or think beyond his dying hour.

Man *dies*. The chrysalis was never dead ;
Its death was only sleep. Show me the worm
Or fly crushed by the grinding wheel, alive

And whole again; show me the bough once dead,
Charred by the fire or rotting in its place,
But now reclothed with leaves and sweet with bloom;
Then will I cry, *Behold the power of God,*
His voice and true handwriting clear revealed,
Emblazoned on the air, the groves, the grass,
Sung by the winds and echoed by the waves,
That man may live beyond these weeds and flies!
But sight like this no human eye hath seen.

So when the swollen hail-cloud breaks on thee,—
As break it will,—when loss has flung thee out
To face the stinging wind and chilly rain,
Or death has broken into thy small fold
And borne away the gentlest, whitest lamb,
Then turn thou not to Nature for a sign
That in some pleasant land beyond these tears,
Fast-folded hands, and endless rows of graves,
Thou will arrive at life that never ends:
Seek not in this God's solemn pledge that thou
On some calm morning, under other skies,
By sweeter waters, walking greener vales,
Shalt overtake that troubled guest, thy life,—
The guest that fled thee at that awful hour
When wife and child and friend stood round thy bed
With breaking hearts, and choking sobs and moans,
To see thy poor tired feet slip down, down, down,
Into the mould and silence, all alone;

Nor turn thine ear to opening bud, or worm
Bursting its wrinkled husk a living thing,
Nor memory's grasp, nor reason's regal flight
Through worlds and ages vast, if thou wouldest hear
That sweet, majestic, strange, Mennonian song
Heard seldom, but forever rolling on
And round all things — beneath the rags, the thrones,
The pomps and charnels of ten thousand years —
The mystic song of Immortality.
But rather turn thee to the Heavenly Word ;
A voice from out those wondrous leaves will steal,
And press into thy heart and gird thy soul
Through all that life may give or take away ;
A fragrance richer than of earthly rose,
A rarer, more bewildering melody
Than slumbers in the chords of that wild harp
Named from the Lord of Winds, or any bird
That shakes his joy in rain of crystal song
Down the green robes of June. Thou shalt be clothed
With strength tenfold, Peace at thy side shall walk,
And thou shalt go rejoicing on thy way
Till the white morning takes the leaden East.

Grant me for truth so much as this, *He rose* ;
Then Nature from her forehead smooths the frown,
From eye and gesture drops the savage threat,
Fire, earthquake, plague, are but the rhythmic lapse
In which all flows to some delicious end ;

Winds, waves, and death no more a huge machine
Whose office is to crush, uproot, and grind,
Then from that ruin fashion and rebuild
A thousand forms as good and beautiful,
To fade, to die, to fall to dust in turn :
Let go that ONE, then know that all is gone.

But grant for truth this only, *That He rose* ;
Then mystic hoverings as of viewless wings,
A sound of unseen feet and garments trailed,
Will chase the horror from my dying room ;
And all who stand about my bed will see
A strange light kindle my fast fading eye, —
A signal that the thread runs on, that death
Is but a rent in those thin curtain-folds,
A passage-way through curtains old and worn,
Which shut us from the fragrance, feasting, joy,
Youth, music, splendor of a higher room.

THE END.

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